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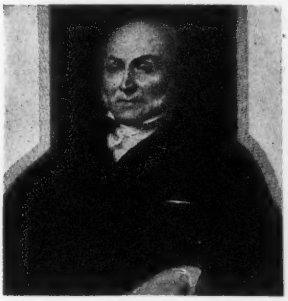

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The Atlantic BOOKSHELF

A Guide to Good Books

MATHEMATICS was the specialty of Archibald Henderson when he graduated from the University of North Carolina and settled down to teach that precise subject at Chapel Hill. But in 1904, and at the age of twenty-six, he followed Emerson's advice and attached his wagon to George Bernard Shaw. Mathematics has continued to be his occupation, Shaw his preoccupation, ever since. Professor Henderson is a friend of Einstein and has written books interpreting the theory of Relativity; he has long been the Boswellian friend of G. B. S., about whom he has written some eight volumes. In addition to this dual devotion, Professor Henderson, a loyal Southerner, has found time to memorialize the literary traditions and the historical background of his home country, North Carolina.

THE MAN *of the* MONTH

ARCHIBALD HENDERSON

Bernard Shaw, Playboy and Prophet

[Appleton, $7.50]

PROFESSOR ARCHIBALD HENDERSON of the University of North Carolina has devoted a large part of his life to collecting facts about G. B. Shaw and writing books and articles concerning that lively old gentleman. Naturally he does not think lightly of his chosen task. But unfortunately this leads him into declaring that he 'discovered' Shaw in 1904, when he saw one of the plays acted in Chicago, and that the publication of his 'authorized' *Life* in 1911 gave Shaw 'a comprehensive reputation, revealing to each astonished section [of the public] three or four Shaws of whose existence it had no suspicion and combining them into a complete man.' This bit of cock-a-doodle-doo has annoyed many reviewers of Professor Henderson's new book, *Bernard Shaw, Playboy and Prophet*, to such an extent that they have failed to do it, or its author, justice. Of course Henderson did n't 'discover' Shaw, and a great number of people in 1911 knew or suspected a many-sided man. What Henderson *did* do in 1904 was to recognize the fact that Shaw represented his age in an extraordinary way, especially for a dramatist, and what the original *Life* did was to drive home the representative character of the man. In this sense he was a discoverer (of course Shaw always knew it!) and that is what Professor Henderson really means.

Professor Henderson's biographical method is made possible by his Boswellian patience in taking down his subject's conversation, his enormous collection of letters, interviews, and casual articles written by Shaw on every variety of topic, and his study of Shaw's considered comment in plays, pamphlets, and prefaces. There were probably plenty of people in 1911 who did not regard Shaw as a genius. A. B. Walkley was one. Plenty regarded him as a clown, and he played up to those gleefully. But time has demonstrated the essential validity for this age of his artistic aims, — the destruction of the 'well-made' play and the creation of the unsentimental drama of ideas, — and demonstrated, too, the integrity of his intellect and the enormous fecundity of his inventive wit. A man who fights a battle ahead of his day and lives to see it won, who keeps and increases the respect of the world in spite of cap and bells, and who in all his work achieves so high a standard of style that the press of all nations delights to quote even his cablegrams and postcards, to say nothing of his plays, is unquestionably a genius. He deserves a Boswell, and future generations will bless his biographer.

The life of Shaw is a history of the artistic and social developments of our age. To see the process through Shaw's eyes, discovering how large a part he played, and to share with him the excitement of battle, are, with all due respect to Frank Harris and the Freudians, more interesting and important than to discover the when and with whom of Shaw's amours. Professor Henderson makes it clear that Shaw is abnormal only in the sense that he possesses a brain, and with that he dismisses the matter, one hopes forever. It is not so easy to dismiss the clowning, nor does he try. It is a part of the Aristophanic comedic genius of the man, perhaps of his Celtic heritage, and to most of us seems an integral part of his charm, perhaps even of his power. It greatly troubled Tolstoi, as this book shows. The imp in Shaw he could not forgive. Shaw's kindness, his justness of spirit, his comprehensive sympathy, his forward look, are easy to show by a thousand examples. When a man's creed is Creative Evolution (see *Back to Methuselah*), the test of him is in action, and Shaw's life has been a long battle for those changes in art and society which seemed to him progress. He emerges from this book a piquant and admirable man to whom literature is but another weapon for the Army of the Lord.

The book is packed with pictures, cartoons, playbills, and sparkles with Shavian anecdotes, letters, and wisecracks. Under such conditions, no book could be dull.

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The BOOKSHELF

Americana

It takes an expert eye to make a sure distinction between diamonds and paste. But there are many fields, including that of description, in which the authentic is quickly and certainly recognized even by the inexpert. The America from which the genius of Mark Twain received its direction, — a Missouri village, the Mississippi River, a Nevada mining camp, the San Francisco of the sixties, — this many-colored background is presented in ***Mark Twain's America***, by **Bernard DeVoto** (Little, Brown, $4.00), not merely with uncommon skill and spirit, but also with a ring of the authentic, to be gained only by shrewd, extensive observation and much study of printed 'sources.' A lively style — albeit marred at times by an imperfect perception of the line that separates the clever from the 'smarty' — contributes generously to the making of a highly entertaining and in many respects illuminating book.

On one of its early pages the author remarks: 'A literary theory is a form of metaphysical autobiography. It permits its contriver to reconstruct facts in harmony with his prepossessions.' Before long one finds that this is but a preface to many pages of polemics, aimed at the theory set forth by Van Wyck Brooks in *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* to the effect that the conventions forced upon Samuel L. Clemens by the conditions of his maturer life frustrated lamentably the Mark Twain that might have been. Despising a 'literary theory,' Mr. DeVoto appears unconscious of propounding and defending one of his own — namely, that 'Mark Twain never became anything but a humorist, realist, and satirist of the frontier; he never desired to be anything else.' In the demolition of Mr. Brooks's theory, and in the support of his own, Mr. DeVoto makes an impressive display of vigor and wit, yet anybody who has sat on a jury and felt that nothing more can be said after one side of a case has been forcibly presented must wish to hear from Mr. Brooks again.

In the *Atlantic* it seems fitting to look especially at Mr. DeVoto's account of the famous dinner to Whittier on his seventieth birthday when Mark Twain attempted a humorous speech which fell dismally flat, as a similar speech under kindred circumstances would have fallen anywhere. Mr. DeVoto sets the scene with a picture of 'parish prigs,' of Holmes addicted to 'a loathsome archness,' of Lowell as 'a tragedy.' He represents Mark Twain as 'indifferent' to 'the intangibles which this society valued.' In fact, by the time of the Whittier dinner, Clemens had undergone the taming of foreign travel, seven years of matrimony, and other experiences which rendered him anything but an indifferent alien. Howells indeed has recorded the agonies he suffered, more acute than those of any other participant in the dinner, over his mortifying performance. Howells relates also that the silence which fell upon the company 'was broken only by the hysterical and blood-curdling laughter of a single guest, whose name shall not be handed down to infamy.' Had Mr. DeVoto's researches only run this miscreant to cover, the fellow might have become immortal as the one righteous man to save a pallid Boston from destruction. Is it, by the way, for the salvation of nations in general — if the candor so dear to Mr. DeVoto can save them — to veil behind highly technical words suggestions that, oddly enough, are still unspeakable in the vernacular? Is it possible that a Victorian reticence is still darkly at work? I wonder — and that without abatement of admiration for Mr. DeVoto's widely various lore of the West and the effective facility and forthrightness of much of the writing in this sprightly book.

From theory and polemics there is a sharp transition to the recording of facts in ***Mary Lincoln, Wife and Widow*** (Harcourt, Brace, $3.00) by **Carl Sandburg** and **Paul M. Angle.** When Gamaliel Bradford wrote his sketch of 'Mrs. Abraham Lincoln' in his *Wives*, he said: 'The difficulty of getting at the actual Mrs. Lincoln is extraordinary and exasperating. . . . There are but a few of her letters in print — and those few are not very significant.' For future investigators the difficulty is now removed by Mr. Sandburg's memoir of Mrs. Lincoln, which fills Part I of the book, and by the 'Letters, Documents and Appendix' by Mr. Angle to which Part II is devoted. It is a sorrowful story, sad enough for the patient, faithful Lincoln himself, compelled to cope with a wife who must have driven him to distraction when he was in the sorest need of all the support he could receive at home, but tragic indeed for Mrs. Lincoln after her husband's death, when, in 1875 and 1876, she was adjudged insane. The situation is now laid appallingly bare — only to the increase of Lincoln's moral stature. Mr. Sandburg's *Prairie Years* is among the most illuminating books about Lincoln. This volume, by virtue of material not available when the earlier book was written, and also through its excellent presentation of that material, is a notable addition to Lincolniana.

M. A. DeWolfe Howe

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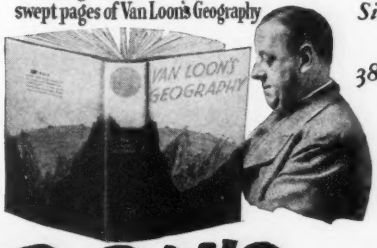

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and two skillful associates of his in the workshop of N. W. Ayer and Son (Marcus Goodrich and Granville Toogood). Good writing means, of course, writing that hits its target, and the authors neatly puncture the absurdity of lifting the Anglo-Saxon word — or, indeed, any characteristic of *some* good writing — to be the standard of excellence. Their happy method of introducing examples of paraphrase is illuminating, and points without tedium the moral that the theme is the ungloved hand which words must fit with precision. To many of us, still first-formers in the interminable School of Writing, not the least interesting part of the book is its exhilarating advice to the professional copywriter. Advertising must do four things: it must attract attention; it must arouse interest; it must create belief; it must lead to action. Novelists, essayists, magazine contributors, writers of the printed word, Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!

E. S.

Porfirio Diaz: Dictator of Mexico,
by Carleton Beals

[Lippincott, $5.00]

Long residence in that country, mastery of its language, sympathetic contacts with all strata of its people, a wide and detailed examination of its incredible terrain, conspire to give to Mr. Carleton Beals the most authentic voice now speaking to us of Mexico and things Mexican. His recent book, *Mexican Maze*, in its very title betrays the baffled mind of even the expert student of our neighbor republic. One man had much to do with making Mexico the puzzle that it is.

That man was Porfirio Diaz, from 1876 to 1911 its ruler. Nominally he was its president (except from 1880 to 1884); really what Mr. Beals calls him, dictator. Many have written about Diaz. But there has been no valid life of the man. While he ruled he controlled or subsidized — or both — every printed utterance concerning him. Result, a series of worthless panegyrics. After he fell, the pendulum swung to the other extreme.

In his preface Mr. Beals disclaims for his biography the characterization of 'academic.' Properly, for it is meagrely documented, and it slights wide and important segments of Mexican history. Benito Juárez, the early neighbor and later leader of Diaz, gets virtually no consideration. During his life he was a far more towering figure than was his lieutenant. The author's conception of Diaz is of a man of stone, ruling an age of iron. He even finds a suggestion in his name — porphyry.

The first half of the life of Diaz is so crowded with incident, with harebrained adventure, with daring, with battles, imprisonments, escapes, and sudden death, that were the authentic facts woven into a work of fiction they would be instantly scouted as incredible. A poor mestizo boy of the Mixtec Indian tribe (Oaxaca), the hero of these adventures received scanty schooling. But he climbed mountains, he swam, he hunted wild game, he became an expert mechanic, he rode horseback, and grew into a lithe and powerful man. To the end he carried himself erect, — as witness the photograph of him at eighty ready to sail into exile, — was an expert horseman, a swordsman, and a dead shot. In Europe, at eighty-one, he plunged one day clothed into the ocean and swam to the rescue of a drowning child.

First he opposed and was persecuted by Santa Anna. Later it was the clericals and the French. He was in those years honest, patriotic, incorruptible, brave, cruel, relentless. Victory won over the conservatives, and the French driven out, he suddenly began to burn with consuming ambition to rule. The story of his rise to power and his long hold upon it cannot be told here. Mr. Beals analyzes and pictures it, ruthlessly, as that rule itself was ruthless. He throws his events on the screen, with cut-backs, fade-outs, and the other devices of the cinema. His style is slashing, often careless, overly graphic, obscure, in the end wearisome. But the book, with its satisfying format, will be read, for it fills a hitherto unfilled gap.

G. B. Winton

With the office shelves pressed down and running over with review books, the bookworm is minded to take a taste here, a taste there, until he discovers those few which he prefers to swallow whole. The first to whet my appetite was ***What Price Football*** by **Barry Wood** (Houghton Mifflin, $1.75), the honest, likable testament of an athlete who can speak his mind. The title suggests a bumptiousness which the text does not allow. Barry is not argumentative, quarrelsome; it is his intent to give an honest, impersonal picture of the conditions under which he and his team (one of the best since Haughton's day) played football at Harvard. It is good to have this clean-cut picture of a game which has been ballyhooed almost to its ruin, but which, if played as Wood describes, is capable of intense enjoyment by others than the spectators.

Next. ***Buying Happiness*** was the title scribbled on a new set of proof sheets, and as I wormed my way inside the forematter I found I had got hold of the fresh, crisp salad of essays by that delightful Chicagoan, **Edgar J. Goodspeed** (University of Chicago, $2.00). This name needs no introducing to *Atlantic* readers, for Professor Goodspeed, one of the few real essayists still footloose, has helped to give the *Atlantic* its trade-mark on several occasions. As everyone knows, in his soberer moments this scholar has translated the Bible into modern, flexible American, an exercise calling for deftness, fine accuracy, and a capacity

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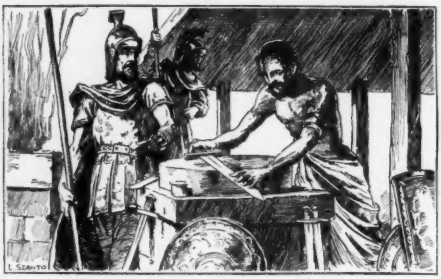

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for compression and power — but not for wit, not for that graceful surprising humor with which the good Doctor surveys the more intimate world about him. These new papers, with their Mid-Western tang and their laughable, quizzical 'deflation' of American salesmen, Continental innkeepers, English lecturers, — to seize upon three choice victims, — are turned with the ease and command of a prose writer who knows how to play.

But there was sterner stuff ahead. ***Light in August*** (Smith and Haas, $2.50), to my mind the most complete, potent, and explicable of **William Faulkner's** novels, is slow to read, difficult at first because it requires a suspension of one's judgment in the face of so much brutality. In the introduction to the limited edition of *Miss Zilphia Gant*, the editor, Mr. Smith, gives us this elucidation of Faulkner's work: 'He is obsessed by decay and insanity and by the futility of man's struggle to become godlike in his wilderness of flesh. . . .' Without wishing to run counter to Mr. Smith, I should like to suggest that the work of this Southern novelist is even more profoundly influenced by the conflict between the white man and the Negro which smoulders beneath the surface of the South that he knows.

Light in August has for its setting a small Southern town with its surface of lazy, indolent life. To this town comes Joe Christmas, a man divided against himself. An orphan with tainted Negro blood in his veins, he has had imposed upon him the loveless standards of white civilization. In the orphan asylum at the age of five, he is told that he will never know his parents and that he must be ashamed because of his 'nigger' blood. In his adopted home, the Hell-and-Damnation cruelty of his Presbyterian foster father does not break his spirit, but rather makes him ruthless in his revolt. He murders his patron, and in his escape is irrevocably doomed to play the part of a fugitive, lonely, embittered, predatory. It is in this condition that he comes to Jefferson, the sleeping community in which he is the tinder that sets fire to a fanaticism of religion, of abolitionism, and of blood.

Written with amazing vividness, capable of the most breathless accuracy and brutality, unerring in its character strokes, even of such minor characters as the Sheriff, capable, as when describing the bloodhounds or the fire, of the most skillful irony, this narrative, it seems to me, aims to depict — does depict — the futility and superficiality of civilization, at least that civilization which we have tried to impose upon the innate racial conflict in our country.

Edward Weeks

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PERSPECTIVES

Thoughts on Leadership and the Republic

HISTORY flows like a river. In a famous passage of the *Decline and Fall* the historian of Imperial Rome, who has watched the current as it swirls and eddies through the centuries, pauses to note how wide and placid the stream, how seemingly content with its destiny, just before it enters the rapids which lead tumultuously and inevitably to the cataract below. In the Age of the Antonines the world seemed to stand static and secure. Gibbon speaks of it as the epoch of happiest quiet and content mankind can remember.

Our Age of the Antonines was in the '90s. We lived in a little world and it was not too much with us. Few were very rich, and in my New England, at least, few were very poor. Religion, if it had begun to decay, still flourished outwardly. A college education was an opportunity, not a convention. It was the day of comfort halfway between necessity and luxury. An understanding of beauty, of discrimination and taste, was being born into the American world. The national character was radiant with optimism. The search for the ultimate seemed fairly begun. The future was America's. Hers was the sure and certain hope of the immortality of nations. Treason it was to question it. When Norton did, his classmate, Senator Hoar, with the conviction that seemed the birthright of our race, apostrophized him as 'color blind and music deaf.' Errors we might make, but Americans were of the Lord beloved, and he would chasten us in moderation.

The whole world (in those days we never reckoned the Orient as part of it) had not lurched from the absolute to the relative. Creation was still moving inevitably to a far-off divine event. The fixity of God's plan was seldom questioned unless by freethinkers and suchlike unpleasant folk. One can measure the strength of the current, during the years between, by recalling an accepted dictum of Herbert Spencer. 'What we call evil,' wrote the most positive of philosophers, 'must disappear. It is certain that we must become perfect. The ultimate develop-

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ment of the ideal man is as certain as any conclusion in which we place the most implicit faith; for instance — that all men die.' *Certain* — the very word is obsolete.

Such was our world of forty years ago. I was a child of it, and the first note of warning from my own generation that the landmarks were growing faint and that we might lose our way among the difficult hills came to me from the verses of a young man, a year or two my senior. A poet is prophet, too. As the sailor feels to-morrow's storm in some delicate shift of air, the poet is ever dimly conscious of the shadows which must cross the path. William Vaughn Moody knew no more of the future than the rest of us, but he felt its imminence, and his instinct was right. It was disquieting in those days to read: —

> But thou, vast outbound ship of souls,
> What harbor town for thee?
> What shapes, when thy arriving tolls,
> Shall crowd the banks to see?
> Shall all the happy shipmates then
> Stand singing brotherly?
> Or shall a haggard ruthless few
> Warp her over and bring her to,
> While the many broken souls of men
> Fester down in the slaver's pen,
> And nothing to say or do?

I had heard older people speak these thoughts, but, because judgment is the only thing of which experience has the right to boast, it is the sole gift of age which youth will not accept. Wisdom, boys believe, is instinctive and innate. When a man young like me — yet how unlike — thought thus, it was matter for conviction. This was no counsel of elders, brought up under the alien influence of an earlier generation, attempting in their folly to clap brakes on the revolving earth, shackling Eternity with the fears of Time. It was the authentic voice of Youth, of my generation, my world. I listened. The patriotic beat of my familiar music was losing its insistence. There was a new and uncertain note in the rhythm of my life.

Other influences there were, of course, a thousand of them, but Moody's was separate and distinct. It was not that I had lost my confidence (though McKinley had supplanted Grover Cleveland, and the Republic was becoming an Empire) that, for all its wobbling, the nation would yet keep the course laid down by the Fathers, and eventually secure the happiness and virtue of mankind. The confidence of us all in that destiny, modest and manifest, was too robust to be dislodged. But within me for the first time stirred fear, doubt, and hesitation. The needle of my pocket compass began to oscillate: never since has it quite regained its fixity. Never since, save for brief intervals, has the course of my country seemed inevitably true, and in times like these one fancies it points to an alien destiny.

It is a commonplace, of course, that Youth takes counsel of its hope, and age of its apprehension, but as I watch the Congressional compass,

> Fear, like the needle verging to the Pole,
> Trembles and trembles into certainty.

Would it have been so with Moody? Just as another poet, generous as he, saw in the Mexican War the renunciation of the Republic's destiny, so to Moody the Spanish adventure rightly indicated that we had trimmed sail and were off on a new course. He was too hot an idealist to laugh over the farce mingled with the tragedy of the Cuban imbroglio. He merely *knew* we were casting away the freedom of the new world for the servitude of the old. And the course of our history for full thirty years proves, I submit, that Moody was substantially right. It was not given him to foresee that our gross iniquity toward an island people would

eventually be set right, not from the moral compulsion of justice, but from the envy of trade and the jealousy of labor, yet even this sardonic method of justifying the ways of man to God would have been grateful to him as the fulfillment of righteousness.

II

What would Moody have thought of our inheritance from the Great War? What shall we think? The times that try man's soul, test his character — we know a good deal more about ourselves than we did a dozen years ago, and a deal more about our country. To the historian ours will seem the record of a vacillating and inharmonious people. We have watched England fight against her poverty as a century ago she fought the Peninsular War, with unremitting courage. We have watched France win the Battle of the Franc as she won the Battle of the Marne. For good or evil, we have watched the integration of Italy and of Russia fashioning worlds out of new elements. But where is the stamp of the American character in the times we live in?

You cannot indict a people. Neither can you summarize the character of a nation. But perhaps you can picture the destinies toward which the nations strive if there can be set before you in roughest outline something of the ideal in which each finds the expression of its nobler hope.

Consider England. Is there a doubt of the type which, after a thousand years, still shadows forth the ideal of the race? Like fruit on English walls, slow ripening by rain and sunshine as well as by the gardener's skill, it comes not through effort only, but through leisure and enjoyment. Ask the farmer; ask the clerk. Drop into a country pub and listen while the foam is blown off the ale. One type there is still trusted and admired, still beckoning young men to follow and enrich a pattern now within limits reaching completeness — the pattern of the English gentleman.

How long and constant this preoccupation of the race! Sidney, still the model, wrote the formula, 'High-erected thoughts seated in the heart of courtesy,' and because such was *his* attainment what epitaph in the solemn Abbey gives a juster sense of adequacy than the simple line above Fulke Greville: 'Here lies a friend of Philip Sidney.' Through the skein of English history runs the same bright thread. The strain is now heroic, now quixotic, and not far from comic when Wellington discloses as a prime reason for his efforts that 'Boney' is not a gentleman!

But even as I speak there is a change. Something there is in nature as in art which, as it nears the goal, shuns it. Perfection is the enemy of effort. From that pinnacle there is no way but down. A contemporary writer whom all of us should know has beautifully shown how the clipper ship was supplanted at the very instant of exquisite completion, and points to the majestic consummation of the locomotive as a present example of an ultimate which cannot be surpassed and must decline.

Whether the goal be permanent or transitory, one may say that the perfecting of the gentleman, with his artificial code, his technique of manners, his consideration for others, his learning, his wisdom, his integrity, is the ultimate fruit of English civilization. Whoever has been so fortunate as to know a Milner or a Grey, a Balfour or a Haldane, will not gainsay this word.

And, against the gentleman, Germany sets the philosopher. Less occupied with social ends than with the laws of Thought, believing Truth an

ample goal without the danger which besets self-cultivation, synthesizing knowledge, abstracting the universe, dreaming the Faustian dream, tempering the spirit to the ether, and beyond the ether reconciling matter and thought — this is the dream the German dreams.

Then France. Beyond lucidity and beyond cynicism, beyond Art and Truth, and the sweet comfortableness of life, she has the vision, such as was manifest at the altar of Domremy — the vision of the Saint. Not the Saint of the Church Universal, but French *pur sang*. Since France and France alone is to herself precious eternally, so this vision of the nation is the sublimation of national genius and virtue, the marriage of France with the eternal.

We who know America, what shall we say of her ideal? Great qualities she has, great and necessary to the salvation of a democracy. Education is a passion with her. President Eliot used to speak of it as the American Religion — but how different from that religion wherein he worshiped the God of the Puritans, who cares not for the glories of the Temple but for the Spirit which dwells therein. For American education is a thing of trappings and appurtenances. Our schools are palaces and our colleges places to wonder at. But the teacher is not a leader, and the preëminence of the learned man is not unquestioned. It is significant that among the Nobel prizes we hardly receive our share. Take Physics: America has won three awards to five for France, seven for England, ten for Germany. Take Chemistry: there America's tally is one to five for England, four for France, and fourteen for Germany. In Medicine, America has scored twice, France thrice, England four times, and Germany six. Nor can we find in Literature our field of victory. Here the single prize-winning American is the satirist of his own country. Among men of learning, Americans are more rarely honored by foreign universities than either German, French, or English scholars. Broadly speaking, it is true scholarship is advancing within our borders, but in its higher reaches there is behind it no such public support as that which in the lower grades rightly demands an equal opportunity for every boy. We are more concerned with the start of the race than with the finish.

Again the ancient rift between what a man does and what he is grows wide amongst us. The indurated Protestant tradition is strong. A man is judged by his works. The English believe in a man equipped for the expression of his own satisfactions. The French applaud the intellectual who in the higher circles of imaginative life is caught up in something which transcends experience. The German aspiration is not for a panacea, but a solution of the universal enigma. These are foreign to us to the point of incredulity. Sense is more to us than sensibility. What we admire is a man who through helping himself helps his fellows, who, abandoning the fruitlessness of theorizing, applies his quick intelligence to the needs, the pleasures, and the comforts of mankind. Edison is our philosopher. Ford is our prophet. Our poet is still unborn.

Of speculative intelligence we are impatient. We want it not in high places. Our President we make in our own image. Our ideal is the man, blameless and worthy, who through useful effort raises himself not too far above his fellows, who lives in righteousness a life of comfort, who does not torture his mind with profitless cerebration, but hitches it to the shafts of everyday life. Dignity is with us little more than freedom from debt, and high thinking is 'high hat.'

Every man of sixty is apt to look companionably upon Pessimism, and perhaps I overstate my case. But I think not. I like Americans too well to talk wantonly in their regard. They are, I say advisedly, the kindest race on earth. No people has a more native generosity, none a more natural taste for virtue or more untainted confidence in the perfectibility of man. I recall a letter of Ferrero's written to me a full decade before Prohibition had put the capstone on our effort to legislate virtue into the minds of men. There was, he said, nothing he liked better about America than this — the paradox of the most practical of peoples attempting to cure evils which every age before had learned were ineradicable, and buoyant in the certainty that man might be forever sheltered from the dangers of wine and women. The simplicities of that faith have been rudely shocked, but the native benevolence of Americans still stands, and if Faith, Hope, Charity, — these three, — be the prime gifts of God, what people is more richly endowed than ours!

I am addressing an American audience. Let me be frank. There is a quality odious even to ourselves, of which we are not innocent. Part of our Puritan inheritance, the vice of hypocrisy, is rooted in that virtue which is the pavement of Hell. We mean well, and are conscious of it, but the ingenuous confidence which Ferrero saw in us has had an evil flowering. The nice man, said the brutal Swift, is the man of nasty ideas, and in our preoccupation with the faults of others we are overnice. I am not thinking of the clamorous example of Prohibition, but rather of the thousand stones we throw at the world from out the windows of our own glass house. How many Americans crying out against the wriggling of foreign debtors keep in their minds memories of our defaulted bonds which made Dickens and Sydney Smith heap us with outrageous scorn? The espionage of Europe is the subject of our spirited sarcasm, yet wire tapping is part of the accepted machinery of our brand of justice. We look with horror on the dole, but forced contributions to American charity are quite another matter. The tramp of Japanese armies in Manchuria is war, but the taking of Vera Cruz is peaceful occupation, and Pershing's invasion of Mexico mere repression of brigandage. We are, in the minds of our majority, the solitary preservers of the world's peace. We cry out against the extravagance of armies we do not need, but in the long line of peace conferences and efforts at naval moderation, the exceptions taken by the United States and the refusals to compromise make a list that would be creditable to the record of the most belligerent power in Europe. We have our peace ideals, but we, too, are realistic, and in the eye of the Eternal I doubt whether the realism on either side of the water is susceptible of our nice distinctions. 'My country, right or wrong' — the patriotic immorality of Decatur's creed that used to be nailed each day to the masthead of the *Chicago Tribune* has at least the virtue of candor, and I think the militant archangels will glow with less passionate resentment at this contravention of the divine command than at the moral unction of the American supplication: 'Lord, we thank Thee that we are not as other men are.'

III

Those of us who are passing out of the full heat of the sun, how well we remember our confident morning. Always on the Fourth of July the orator pointed to the starry flag. Each star, he would say, differeth from another star in glory. But how wide and how

essential that difference was he withheld from us. The awful lesson of the Civil War had taught the country what sectionalism meant, yet it was the sectionalism of two unequal halves, not a patchwork of discordant and clamorous selfishness. We thought the star dust of our constellation a single substance, a soil to breed planets of like growth. Many writers have called attention to the gross economic injustice of the political equalities of unequal States, but what I would suggest is a more difficult inequality. Great sections of the United States breed, and have bred for generations, men whose hearts and minds have lifted them to historic eminence, but greater sections still seem sterile soil. Great men are rare as they are precious, and no community can be reproached because genius is foreign to it. What I have in view is not genius, but that definite superiority of mind and character which compels men generally to give heed to its possessor and to look to him as a leader in the town that bore him, in the State that honors him, and in rarer instances throughout a nation, giving a whole people the pride and unity of a common inheritance. Such men have made America; or if, in a literal sense, they have not made her, they have given her significance and interpretation, and an understanding of herself. They are her essence — the distillation of her spirit. I speak, of course, not of political leaders merely, but of all whose energies, mental and moral, have enlarged for their fellow men the possibilities of life, widening, as it were, the breathing spaces of the world.

Of such in America the roster is generous. New England has given them to us abundantly, and the Northern seaboard States. To Kentucky and Virginia we are in debt forever. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois — their quota has been paid. Till the Civil War strewed salt over her furrows, South Carolina brought forth abundantly. Missouri has played her part. Tennessee has held her own. Kansas cannot be pointed at. But look beyond: Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, California, Washington, Oregon, Nebraska, the Dakotas — call the roll and who shall answer present? Go west from the farthest boundary of Illinois. For two thousand miles you shall hardly pass a village where a leader has been born.

I do not forget that a man from Iowa lives in the White House, that Nebraska has given us the useful Roscoe Pound, or that the invigorating honesty that is Tom Walsh, like the La Follettes, sprang from Wisconsin. Other exceptions there are, but, be it noted, these Western heroes are almost uniformly in the field of politics. Scientists, painters, musicians, poets, writers — the temper and the quality of our best are Eastern-born. Not only the men who made the West, but their successors, owe to the East their birth and inheritance. Take the names associated in men's minds with Western modes of thought. How few of them are native sons! The Great Commoner hailed, not from Nebraska, but from Illinois. The great Dissenter — Borah — was a man grown before he saw Idaho. Miss Cather, of the West, West, is Virginia-born. The Western poets, Jeffers and Neihardt, first crossed the Mississippi from East to West.

These are typical cases. By and large, for a thousand miles north and south, for two thousand east and west, for all its wheat and corn and cattle, the land is, in the breeding of leadership, sterile soil. Here is an empire which produces men — the man almost never. Generalizations are always wrong, but they are not always false. When men say to me that one

fourth of America enjoys the wealth the whole country produces, I say to them that all America enjoys the leaders which one fourth of the country produces.

I remember, of course, that of this great territory much — though not all — is new, and that through centuries, not decades, a race comes to its fulfillment. I bear it well in mind how vocal is my own Massachusetts in praising her famous men until the last patient listener departs. I recognize that as the centre of population treks slowly westward there is some tendency through the Middle West to improve its quota, but, making every allowance, the record in its essential is little altered.

Thus far had I come in my quest when I came upon certain corroborative evidence of real interest. Some forty years ago Henry Cabot Lodge was curious enough to make some attempt at an appraisal of this kind, basing his estimate upon the names recorded as of eminence in Appleton's cyclopedia. Since the records of 15,000 Americans are printed there, it seemed to Lodge a fair basis for important speculation. I quote from his conclusion: 'Two States, Massachusetts and New York, have furnished more than one third of the ability of the entire country; three, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania, have supplied almost exactly one half, and five, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Virginia, have produced two thirds of the whole amount.'

This investigation was made in 1892. Let us check it by the figures of 1932. Remember that forty years have passed, more than a quarter of our nation's history, though not, of course, of the history of the American-born. Remember that much of the West and very much of the South are not new country. Texas, for example, was admitted to the Union in 1845, California in 1850, Oregon in 1859.

An index of the first four volumes of the *Dictionary of American Biography* has recently been published. It is possible that when that great work is complete the figures now deducible may be altered, but if, as is most likely, percentages remain reasonably constant, they will furnish an extraordinary confirmation of my thesis. By this later test the order of excellence of the first five States, forty years later, remains the same — Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Virginia. Lodge counted Maryland sixth, but the *Dictionary* gives this honorable place to Ohio. Four States of the Union embrace almost exactly one half of all the leaders of the forty-eight.

IV

An American who ponders these new figures has matter for thought. Here is, as it were, in shadowy outline an intellectual map of the United States. The selection of individuals on which it is based has been made in a catholic and a tolerant spirit, yet these first four volumes give a total of well over four hundred distinguished names to the State of Massachusetts, ninety-seven to Ohio, sixty-six to Maryland, while California scores three, Texas two, Arkansas, Kansas, New Mexico, Oregon, one each, and the cyclopedia adds a sardonic touch by naming 'Bright Eyes' as the single choice from the sovereign State of Nebraska. Ten States are absolutely without representation. The West and Southwest may be coming into their own, but the pace is certainly deliberate. It would, of course, be grossly unfair not to take into consideration the long lead of the original States and their early successors, but a disparity so immense and so continuing cannot be waved aside.

A competent judge to whom I put the question hazarded the opinion that as time goes on the newer regions will furnish their proportionate share of preëminent men of action, but that in the proportion of men in the professions and intellectual callings the older régime tends to maintain its ascendancy.

These, you will say, are but guesses based on the slippery sands of judgment. In a sense they are. There is no fixed standard of eminence, no means of making accurate comparison, but all the straws blow steadily in the same direction, and whoso without special pleading writes the history of our country will not, I think, take a view far different from that which is here foreshadowed.

It is the West, remember, not the East, on which the American experiment depends. There lives our distinctive civilization. To the foreigner, not the cosmopolitanism of our seaboard cities, but the Americanism of the vast central plain and all that lies beyond, marks our contribution to social history. New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, have their parallels; not so this bountiful storehouse of every human need, where the law of equal opportunity has on the whole been better observed than elsewhere on this earth, and where the yeast of the new world still ferments. If not of knowledge and attainment, the focus of political and of social control moves steadily westward. It is in the West that our country's history will be wrought, and the time is not distant when the complacent East will study the injunction which English intelligence learned long since from Disraeli's lips: 'Now we must educate our masters.'

Why should this rich empire of South and West be so poor? Why this fertility in crops, yet, in the crop of crops, such barrenness? Of the sixty-nine men and women whom the country has delighted to honor in the Hall of Fame, why should every one be born in so circumscribed an area? In the Rotunda of the Capitol at Washington, read the names which half the States and more present as heroes to the nation, and ponder the significance of their insignificance. Take lists of men of science, men of learning, men of letters; it is ever to States which have that more is given. The theories which in the far-off '90s I used to read, ascribing the qualities of men to the geography of their native soil — the theories of Buckle and Taine, and in more fantastic form of Gobineau, gather dust upon the shelves. But between men of mark and the localities which brought them to manhood, who shall say there is no bond? Soil and food and climate — these, said the elder alchemists, make the men who make History. These indeed may breed the physical qualities, but that voice of peculiar authority, that response to the unspoken longings of the crowd, what gives a man that? Neither you nor I know. Probably the quality of the original stock plays the prime part. The crop depends upon the seed, and in the new vigor of Ohio, for instance, we seem to see something of the strength of her New England inheritance. From every centre of learning radiates its influence. In the four volumes of the *Dictionary of American Biography* there are listed 168 sons of Harvard, 125 of Yale, and of Amherst, Brown, and Williams, 24, 28, and 25. Such figures show that, in the making of men, formal education plays its part. But other powerful influences are at work, and I wonder whether in the very inequality of circumstance at which the nation rails, in the give-and-take of opposing interests, in dissimilarity rather than in harmony and sameness, that

soil is not prepared where seeds of power grow.

Look about us. Whatever the secret of birth, how little interest there is in the United States in the exceptional boy! Our schools, like our motors, must be built for the average. For those who fall below our standard, — the defectives, — how ample and how sympathetic the provision! But for the exceptional boy how meagre the opportunity! At school he is promoted not into a class of superiors, but — what a world away — into a superior class, and not till he manages his own affairs in the world does he find his real mates.

All the machinery in our national life works toward an average. Of this sort of thing we talk much, but few understand how complete and unrelenting is the pressure against individuality. Laws bind us, taxes grind us toward a common level. National advertising, syndicated newspapers, College Board examinations, movies giving the same performance in a hundred theatres, the Book-of-the-Month, chain stores — all are ceaselessly at work flattening out the difference between Tom and Dick and leveling their distinction from Harry. There are sections of the United States where interests are still contrasted, and where the lives men live side by side are still incongruous. Here privacy is not yet snobbishness and men keep their friends *because* they have different views. The clash of thought and temperament is supported by the material cleavage beneath it. Men think their own thoughts and grow in their own image.

Consider the vast South and the still vaster West. Admirable as they are for the patient and persistent industry which has given honorable and independent comfort to fifty millions of people, yet it remains true that the wide open spaces open wide on intellectual nothingness. I would not speak harshly. Intellect is not everything, but without it a people cannot grow great.

V

In Moody's boyhood and mine there still lived a Prophet now largely except in name forgotten. Leadership among men, the qualities that make for it, the effect it has on the thought and will of mankind, were his prime preoccupation. He rated the times in which he lived harshly enough, but the salvation in which he believed is worth recalling, for whatever validity it had then is tenfold greater now.

'I liken languid times,' cried he, 'with their unbelief, distress, perplexity, with their languid doubting characters and embarrassed circumstances impotently crumbling down into ever worse distress toward final ruin — all this I liken to dry dead fuel waiting for the lightning out of Heaven that shall kindle it. The great man with his free force out of God's own hand is the lightning. His word is the wise healing word which all can believe in. All blazes round him now, when once he has struck on it, into fire like his own. The dry mouldering sticks are thought to have called him forth. They did want him greatly — but as to calling him forth — ! Those are critics of small vision, I think, who cry: "See, is it not the sticks that made the fire?" No sadder proof can be given by a man of his own littleness than disbelief in great men. There is no sadder symptom of a generation than such general blindness to the spiritual lightning, with faith only in the heap of barren dead fuel. It is the last consummation of unbelief. In all epochs of the world's history we shall find the Great Man to have been the indispensable Savior of his epoch —

the lightning without which the fuel had never been burnt. The History of the world, I said already, is the Biography of great men.'

Is not this man a true prophet, himself one of those who exemplify his burning words? With all the current cant about the wisdom of the people, is it not true that the curse of our generation is the multitudinous voices of cliques and bands and parties which confound confusion with their discords? The very name of a minority where once we thought truth resided is become a menace. Not till there is a lonely trumpet note that thrills through countless hearts do we close our ranks and march forward. Consider the world to-day. Does anyone doubt that the responsible ministers of Europe and the United States, the Hoovers, MacDonalds, Hindenburgs, and Herriots, would do much to compose the world's griefs were they trusted and freed from the constant fears of the discordant and unruly multitudes behind them? Our need is not for dictatorships or royalties, but for men who, trusting in democracies, are themselves trusted in return. The dry dead fuel is all about us, but the fire does not come down from Heaven.

If it would come at our call, should we call it? I like to think that from the bitterness of these years of depression at least we have reverted once more to our old American attitude toward leadership. True it is that in the modern world the influence of the individual has on the whole declined. It would be an interesting excursion into history to examine how the controlling importance of leaders has been largely supplanted by the dominance of invention. Printing presses, steam engines, electric motors in all their bewildering and pervasive ramifications, have led the advance, and here in America they have more and more controlled the destinies of the nation. The problem of Frankenstein besets us. Even so late as 1929 we thought that machines had secured our well-being, but when our cloud-capped towers collapsed the ancient and eternal need for men returned.

What directs the course of history is a subject too vast for random comment. I would not here bring into question the theory of economic determinism. Rather I would lay stress on what the presence of great men means to a nation as inspiration to its ideals, and illumination of those half-understood forces which mark the character of the times. How instantly we respond to the man who in speech or sermon, architecture or music, expresses thoughts disconnected and dormant within us, making them leap together like filings to a magnet. It chanced that I was present at the last Democratic Convention, looking with wonderment that with me never grows less at the touching efforts of a great party to express without adequate leadership its own mind. Watching as it were the struggle of a new era in the pangs of birth, I was struck by the universal, painful longing for some man of men to teach and lead the people. During the moments of the conventional invocation which opened the session I have no doubt that the prayer in my own heart merely echoed the silent petition of forty thousand men: 'Lord God, give us a man.'

To me it seems a clear sign of the times that, as confidence in our national destiny has waned, an ever-deepening desire spreads through our community for a man to do what we long for, but cannot do ourselves.

VI

In the literature of lamentation there is a tendency to prolong the unhappy note. Jeremiah overstayed his wel-

come, and I would profit by his example. Yet it is not prudence but justice rather which bids me lift up my heart. America cannot plead the errors of youth. She was, as some sensible commentator has said, born old, and hers are the faults not of a young but of an unripened education. No longer can her bitterest critics say of her that she suffers from self-flattery. But if in these grim years our nerves are taut and our temper bad, if there are violence and disorder in our ranks during the long retreat, let us remember that it is we of the elder generation who left the way our fathers trod. We have eaten sour grapes, and our children's teeth are set on edge. Defeatism and lethargy, which seem now to confound our country's destiny, will pass. In that vast territory which seems to us so blank, the greater universities and the colleges, now too numerous to be strong, will gradually enlarge the horizon of their influence and spread the rich pattern of a national culture. In a democracy like ours, progress cannot alone be measured by leaders, but also by the unknown heroes of our moral and intellectual life who in their quiet stations pass the torch from hand to hand. No one who has traveled widely in America and has learned to look past the brick block and the drug store to quiet and restful homes beyond but knows how almost every town has its individual or group to whom automobiles rank below ideas, who love to think, to speculate, and read. Whenever a fine and serious book is written, a *Variety of Religious Experience*, an autobiography like Henry Adams's, an American Epic, its sale leaps like living flame across the prairies, and does not go out. Never was soil more ripe for the earing than this heart of America.

Not again, it is true, shall we be the people of Moody's youth, but, surely as the Mississippi flows to the sea, our mission shall be fulfilled. The American spirit which has brooded not once or twice over desperate phases of our country's life still speaks to us. We follow now where no men lead, but leaders shall be vouchsafed to us. The wrack and ruin about us shall give us the strength of men who, with backs to the wall, look toward the sun.

We shall discern the right
And do it, tardily. — O ye who lead,
Take heed!
Blindness we may forgive, but baseness we will smite.

E. S.

LORD OF MARUTEA

The Director's Story

BY JAMES NORMAN HALL

I

BEFORE the war there were a number of Germans scattered among the islands of French Polynesia. Afterward they were gathered in and sent back to Germany, and their property confiscated. Herr Müller was an exception; he was left on Marutea. I don't know why, unless it was that he had lived there for so many years. I should n't wonder if they were afraid to molest him. Whatever the reason, there he was when I went to his island in 1923.

I was employed by a European syndicate at that time, under contract to produce one picture a year for a term of three years, each of them to be concerned with the life of primitive people in remote corners of the world. That is how I came to be interested in Marutea in the first place. I was attracted by its name almost as much as by its isolated position. As a matter of fact, it proved to be precisely the island I was searching for.

'His island' I have called it, and so it was, although he did n't own a square foot of land outside his trading compound; but he had lived there for so long that he had come to look upon it as his own property. 'My island,' he would say; 'my copra,' 'my pearls,' 'my pearl shell,' 'my people.' He was right about it, too. The very fish in the lagoon and in the sea beyond belonged to him, and could only be caught and eaten by his authority. Mussolini himself might have been envious of this man's power. It was confined to the one island, but absolute within that limit.

He did own one piece of property in addition to his trading station — the *Turia*, an ancient, leaky, sixty-ton schooner used to bring his copra and pearl shell to the Tahiti market and to carry back his supplies of trade goods. When I arrived at Tahiti the vessel was in port there, on one of her annual calls. Her skipper was a huge man of forty-odd years, with mild brown eyes and a gentle, engaging manner of speech. He was Otto Müller, Jr., the oldest of his father's large family of half-caste children.

Otto Müller was shocked, almost incredulous, at my request for passage to Marutea for myself and my two cameramen. I can think of no other words with which to express his attitude.

'I could n't possibly take you, sir,' he said.

'Why not?' I asked.

'My father would never permit it. He will have no visitors on the island. He would be very angry with me if I brought any.'

He regarded me with an awed, frightened expression, like that of a small boy asked by another boy to

rifle his father's desk, or to commit some other unheard-of depredation.

Well, the more he objected, the more I urged. No other vessel called at Marutea; it was the *Turia* or nothing, and I was determined to go. At last I gained Otto's reluctant consent. I agreed to take full responsibility, and to explain to his father, if it should be necessary, how I had forced myself aboard the schooner with all my goods and chattels. Otto was of the opinion that we should not be permitted to land. I told him that I was willing to take a chance on that and, if permission were not given, would pay whatever his father asked for passage in the *Turia* to another island I had in reserve, one hundred and fifty miles from Marutea.

II

At the outset of the voyage I put Herr Müller out of mind; I would worry about him when the time came. Meanwhile, we had to reach his island in a vessel that leaked like a wicker basket. We must have pumped half the Pacific through her before we reached Marutea. We had calms and head winds day after day, and once we were hove to in a gale that I thought would founder us. My two cameramen, George Crossland and Karl Zimmerman, thought it a great lark. Fine lads, both of them. As for myself, it seemed to me that we had been born on that vessel; that we had traveled beyond the limits of the known world. Not a sail, not a smudge of smoke on the horizon — nothing but empty sea and the tired old schooner, her belly half full of salt water, trudging along in the centre of it, under an empty sky.

We got there at last, and from the moment of sighting land all the anxieties and discomforts of the voyage were forgotten. I shall not attempt to give you an idea of the beauty of the place. Words can't do it, pictures can't do it. Music could, and only music. If you were to see Marutea, you would understand why I think so.

Through my binoculars I saw Herr Müller from afar; he was standing on the beach near the landing place with a telescope on a tripod before him. He leveled it at us from time to time as we approached, searching the schooner carefully, from stem to stern. Several times the glass was directed at me, long and steadily. I confess that I felt uncomfortable under that long-range scrutiny. An influence decidedly hostile seemed to be making itself felt. A large crowd of natives stood or sat in a circle around him. They made a glorious picture against the background of dazzling white beach, coconut palms, and blue sky. I saw no buildings except a sort of warehouse at one side, near the beach. Even that was beautiful with the shadows of palm fronds moving over its whitewashed walls. One would have said it had been built for that purpose.

The schooner was brought into the wind a quarter of a mile offshore and the whaleboat lowered. Otto Müller was very uneasy and apprehensive. He could not go ashore with us, and he warned me to be careful what I should say to his father.

'Have you any suggestions as to how to begin?' I asked.

'No; only let him speak first, Mr. Forrest. I'm afraid there's no hope of his letting you stay. I should n't have brought you; I really should n't have!'

'Nonsense, Otto!' I said, jokingly. 'He won't shoot me, will he?'

Otto was silent for a moment, as though seriously considering this possibility.

'No, he would n't do that, but he might strike you with his walking stick. It is an ironwood stick, and he

might hurt you badly. It would n't be the first time he has used it. He would be very sorry afterward, but then it would be too late.'

Crossland and Zimmerman came ashore with me. With four native boys at the oars and one at the steering sweep, we approached the reef. It was an ugly-looking landing place, and the heavy onshore swell made it uglier still. We got across without mishap, but my heart was in my mouth for a few seconds. The boat grounded in the shallows twenty yards or so from the beach, and the sailors started to carry the three of us, pickaback, to dry ground. Herr Müller strode forward and shouted something to them in the native tongue. They dropped us so abruptly that I lost my balance and sat down in two feet of water. Crossland and Zimmerman were as surprised as I was, but they had not fallen and they whooped with joy at my plight. They were the only ones who laughed. The crowd of natives looked on in silence, gazing from Herr Müller to me and back again. He stood with his hands clasped over his cane, which looked more like a war club than a walking stick.

He was a magnificent figure of a man, with thick white hair and a snow-white beard reaching nearly to his waist. I had seen many an island trader in my wanderings, but never one like this. It was inconceivable to me that he could belong to that fraternity. Race and character were written all over him; he looked like some old German baron who had strayed out of the feudal system. Vitality radiated from him — from his beard, from the tips of his strong brown fingers, most of all from his blazing blue eyes. You felt it as you feel the heat of tropical sunlight, and it seemed to come from as inexhaustible a reservoir. He folded his hands across his chest, one hand still grasping the stick, and waited for us to approach.

We all have our pride, and I could imagine what a ridiculous figure I presented as I waded, dripping, to the beach. Inwardly, I was boiling with rage, but I took care to conceal it. Remembering Otto's advice, I waited for his father to speak. He looked from one to another of us for a moment; then he said, in English, 'Why have you come here?'

His voice was deep and powerful, and he spoke with only a slight accent. I suppose I should have been prepared for that question, but the fact was that I stood there, tongue-tied, like a small boy caught stealing cookies in his mother's pantry.

'Why have you come here?' he repeated. The knuckles of his huge fists were white, and I more than half expected him to swing his club without giving me a further chance to reply. He took a quick stride forward, and I needed all my presence of mind to keep from ducking. He did n't offer to strike me, however. With his stick he drew a line in the sand. 'You will go no farther than that from where you stand,' he said. Then he raised his arms horizontally and glanced back over his shoulder. Two husky young men sprang forward, ducked under his arms, picked him up, and staggered out with him to the whaleboat. A moment later they were across the reef and on their way out to the schooner.

III

Never in my life before had I been so taken at a disadvantage. After the showing I had made before all those people, I felt that I must do something to reassert my manhood, so I walked across Herr Müller's boundary line and sat down in the shade at the upper slope of the beach. Crossland and

Zimmerman came too. A murmur ran through the crowd at this defiant action, but whether of surprise or approval or apprehension it was impossible to say. Soon the hum of talk became general, but I noticed that the natives kept their voices under, as though they were afraid that Herr Müller might hear them even at that distance.

I glanced over the gathering, sick at heart at the thought that we should not, in all probability, be permitted to stay on Marutea. Nature has developed no finer race than the Polynesian. Here was the company for my picture, from the children to the great-grandparents. They had intelligent mobile faces, their teeth were flawless, as white as coconut milk, and their bodies were a delight to the eye. There was not a deformed or sickly-looking person among them. I picked out my principals there and then, and in the imagination I was already at work, the film, 'Marutea,' taking shape.

The buzz of conversation died away; the whaleboat was returning. Herr Müller was now at the steering sweep. He had removed his shoes and his white coat, rolled up his trousers to the knee, and was standing with his bare feet braced on the gunwales. In the intervals between the thunder of the surf we could hear him urging the oarsmen on, but, instead of coming to the usual boat passage, he steered to a point where the surf piled up in an awe-inspiring manner.

'Good Lord!' Crossland said. 'Surely he won't try crossing there!' It looked like a mad attempt, but there was no doubt of Herr Müller's purpose. Immense coral boulders were scattered there, the wreckage, evidently, of some old hurricane, and the surf piling in among them spouted high in fountains of spray and solid water. All the natives were now on their feet, talking excitedly. Old Müller stood in an easy, careless posture, his head turned over his shoulder as he watched the following seas. I wanted to cheer at the noble picture he made. At last, far out, he saw the wave he was waiting for, lifting its back slowly and majestically as it swept in. He shouted his order and the men made their oars crack. Involuntarily I closed my eyes for an instant. When I opened them again the whaleboat was gliding down an appalling slope of surf between two boulders that dwarfed the little craft, and the great volume of water hurled over the reef carried them across the shallows and grounded their boat high up on the sand.

Herr Müller sprang out and came toward us in great strides, his arms outstretched, his face beaming. He seized both my hands and shook them warmly.

'Mr. Forrest!' he exclaimed. 'You are welcome to my island! Forgive me, my friend! What a beast I am! I lose my temper like that — for nothing! But why did you not speak? And you have with you a countryman of mine, *nicht wahr?* It is this young man!' And he turned to Zimmerman and grasped him by the shoulders. 'Not since ten years have I met a German!' He spoke rapidly and eagerly to Zimmerman, and a moment later turned again to me, laughing delightedly.

'Do you know what this young man say to me, Mr. Forrest? He thinks I am a wonderful boat steerer. Never has he seen anyone cross the reef like I do it. No, and you will never see another, my young friend! Ask these men, born on the island, who live in the sea half the time. Not one of them has the courage, or the strength, or the quick eye, like mine. I am seventy years old, Mr. Forrest, and I am the best man on this island, old or young!'

Of a sudden his eyes filled with tears.

'And I treat you like dogs! But why

have you not told me? You are an artist! I too am an artist, Mr. Forrest. Yes, in this lonely place you find a brother artist.'

'It is kind of you to call me that, Herr Müller,' I replied; 'but the truth is, I am only a maker of motion pictures.'

'Well, that too may be art,' he replied. 'Never have I seen a motion picture, but I keep in touch with the world. I have my books from Germany, my reviews and illustrated journals. I know a little of what is being done in this new form of art. It is not great, perhaps, like music, but I give it my sympathy, my respect.'

To say that I was relieved is to say little. He was simply charming. I could hardly believe this the same man who had stood, grasping his club, half an hour before.

'Otto has told me,' he went on. 'You are employed by a German company. You wish to make a picture of our island life?'

'I should like to very much, Herr Müller. Will you let us stay?'

'Stay? Of course you shall stay!' he replied, warmly. 'You shall have everything you want. You have only to ask me.'

IV

With the natives following, we crossed the island to the lagoon beach where the village lay. The houses were scattered along the curve of the beach for a distance of half a mile on either side of Herr Müller's trading station, and before them stretched the great lagoon, as placid as a mountain lake, shimmering in the morning sunlight. The native dwellings were of palm-frond thatch, and stood on clean coral sand that looked as though it were swept every morning; and so it was, as I found later. Every leaf, every twig, every fallen palm frond, was gathered up daily and burned by Herr Müller's orders. For all his many years of exile he had not lost his German passion for order and cleanliness.

His trading station was a two-story building of coral cement, with wide verandahs both upstairs and down. It stood at a distance of fifty yards from the beach, and the intervening space was like the military parade grounds one sees in German provincial towns — except that it was beautifully shaded with coconut palms, and fine old puka trees that must have been growing there from heathen times. The store and warerooms occupied most of the lower floor. Upstairs were his living quarters, cool, spacious, high-ceilinged rooms furnished with richly carved and massive beds, wardrobes, tables, chairs, and sofas. On the walls were mirrors in heavy gilded frames, and paintings of German landscapes in the romantic style of fifty years ago. There was even a grand piano. You can imagine our astonishment at finding one on a coral island seven hundred miles from the nearest steamship route.

I heard the piano played a few evenings later. It was a strange and memorable experience. We had had dinner with Herr Müller, served in his spacious dining room at a table that would have accommodated a dozen guests. Shortly after the meal he excused Crossland and Zimmerman, but it was plain that he wished me to remain. We smoked in silence for a few minutes; then he said, 'Tell me, Mr. Forrest; you have recently come from Germany?'

'Not six months ago,' I replied.

'You have been in Hanover, perhaps?' And, without waiting for a reply: 'That was my home, and I have not seen it for fifty years!'

His eyes filled with tears and he leaned his head on his hands, gazing at the table in front of him. Not knowing

what to say, I said nothing. I was surprised at this sudden change in mood; not five minutes earlier his light-hearted laughter had made the walls ring. Presently he raised his head, with such a look of desolation in his eyes that I was deeply touched.

'Forgive me. I cry this way — like a child. But it is not for nothing, believe me!' He drew a handkerchief from his pocket and blew a blast on his nose that must have been heard all over the village, but somehow there was nothing comical in the action.

'I have told you that I am an artist,' he went on. 'You have wondered about that, perhaps? You have said to yourself: "An artist? *Was für ein* artist in such a place?" . . . I keep it locked up — so long — so long — here!' He struck his chest a heavy blow. 'Sometimes, Mr. Forrest, I think I go mad! I am more than forty years in this savage place, and now my life is over. When I think what it might have been . . . And I have been ruined by my own father!'

He straightened up in his chair and his eyes blazed with anger. 'A beast of a man! But no . . . what am I saying? He is dead. Yes, I have forgiven him, but it has been hard . . . hard. Listen, my friend. You shall judge.'

V

And then he told me his story. I wish that I could tell it as he did — with his voice, his words, his passionate intensity. He gave me the history of his life. Briefly, these were the facts of it.

He was the fourth of eight sons. His father was a wealthy and influential manufacturer of surgical instruments. He had definite plans for all his boys. Four were to go into the army, two into the diplomatic service, and two into his own business. When the fourth son gave promise of having remarkable musical ability, his father encouraged him to develop it. He was supplied with the best teachers that could be found, in both voice and piano, but it was no part of his father's plan that any of his children should follow a musical career. Music was well enough as an accomplishment, as an amusement for leisure hours, but this son was destined for the army, and into the army he must go.

Young Müller had his father's iron will and passionate nature. Music was the breath of life to him, and he determined to carve out a career for himself. In his eighteenth year came the trial of strength. His father commanded him to return home from Munich, where he was studying, prepared to enter an officers' training school. Müller refused. His father cut off his funds and the son was compelled to work for his living. No matter. He worked ten hours a day and continued his musical studies at night. In his twenty-first year he was given a place in the Hanover opera company. He joined it secretly, living in lodgings hidden away from his family, and studied and rehearsed his parts without his father knowing that he was in the city. Then came the opening night of the opera season. It was the great event of his life. He had a triumph, he said, and was called repeatedly before the curtain with the principals. His father was present, and young Müller thought he had vindicated his right to direct his own life. The father thought otherwise. Being a man of great influence, he compelled the directors of the company to discharge his son.

'Then, Mr. Forrest, I am like a crazy man. You cannot know what this chance to sing means to me. In my dreams I have seen how splendid my future will be. Everyone is astonished at my voice, and my teachers have all said that I shall be one of

the great singers of Germany, perhaps the greatest of my time. When I am told, "You can no longer sing in this company; your father will not permit it," I am like a man who has lost everything. If only I could be patient, and work, and say nothing! Hanover is not the only city in Germany. But no, in my grief, my great madness, I forget everything. Think of it! I destroy my life to shame my father! Yes, that is what I do. I say to myself: "I will sing no more! Never! Never! I will be like a dog, a homeless dog! I will throw dirt on the name of Müller!"'

For three years, so he told me, he held fast to this resolution. He wandered far and wide over the earth, and all the time his one desire was to degrade himself and disgrace the name of Müller. At last he came to Marutea, still planning some revenge that would break his father's heart. Then came the inspiration. He married an island woman, daughter of the chief of Marutea, but still a native, and when he had two children by her he sent all the way to Tahiti for a photographer to come to the island. He dressed himself, his wife, and their two children like the lowest of savages. They were photographed in this fashion before a palm-thatched hovel. He then sent home his marriage certificate and one of these photographs, inscribed, 'To my father, from Otto Müller and his family.'

'Then, Mr. Forrest, I wake up . . . like that!' and he snapped his fingers. 'I am a man who has been mad, who has had an evil dream. Now it is gone; I am a Müller again, and my good German blood speaks to me. I have taken a terrible revenge; but it is too late now — the harm is done. I killed my father — that I was told by one of my brothers. His pride was broken forever. The anger I have kept so long leave me, and I again wish to make something of my life. I have a wife. I have children I love; they are of the best Polynesian blood; I have no need to be ashamed. I see that I must build up my life here, on this island. When I come out of my bad dream I begin to plan, to create. This island shall be a kingdom for me, and all of these people shall be my children. I see how I can make them happy and prosperous, and I take charge of their affairs.'

Then returned his great love and longing for music. He had sworn never to play or sing again, but with the first money he earned as a trader he sent for a piano. Gradually he sent for other things, so that he might live like a self-respecting German.

VI

That, in the barest outline, is the story he told me. When he had finished he rose, and I thought I was to be dismissed; but no — this was to be one of his musical evenings. One night in every week, he said, his people came to hear him play and sing. 'One must have music, *nicht wahr?* You will see, my friend, how my people love this music. It is necessary. No longer can they live without it.'

Sure enough, when we walked out to the upstairs verandah, the whole village was gathering in the open space before his house. A chair was placed for me at one side of the crowd. The natives sat cross-legged on the ground, at a distance of twenty or thirty yards from the house. The piano was rolled out on the upstairs verandah and so placed that, while playing, Herr Müller would sit sidewise to his audience. Over it was suspended a gasoline vapor lamp, provided with a shade that threw the clear white light directly upon him. It was the nearest thing to a spotlight, I imagine, that he was able to devise.

Presently a bell was struck — three

sonorous clangs. The late comers seated themselves hurriedly and the hum of conversation died away. There must have been well over two hundred people in the audience. We waited in deep silence for some little time; then Herr Müller appeared, in full evening dress, as he might have appeared on the concert stage in Hanover. A fine figure he made as he came forward to the verandah railing and stood, resting his hands upon it, looking down at us. At the moment of his appearance the audience started a vigorous clapping of hands, and Herr Müller bowed gravely to right and left; then he seated himself at the piano.

Picture, if you can, that strange scene. It was a perfect tropic night, windless and clear. From the far side of the island came the faint thunder of the surf, giving a voice to mid-ocean solitude, and behind us lay the lagoon with the stems of the palms outlined in silhouette against it. Herr Müller's audience was all but invisible in the deep shade of the puka trees, but here and there a gleam of moonlight outlined a bare brown leg, the contour of a cheek, or the curve of a naked shoulder. The intense light of the vapor lamp fell full upon him, deepening the gloom outside.

I wish that I might have known his thoughts at that moment. One thing seemed quite certain: he was no longer at Marutea. He was in Germany — in Munich, perhaps, or Berlin, before a vast audience of his fellow countrymen. He was at the summit of his career, the great singer he had so often dreamed of being. He sat for a moment with his head bowed, his fingers resting lightly on the keys. Then he sang Wagner's 'Evening Star.'

'*Oh, du mein holder Abendstern . . .*' I can hear the words at this moment, sung, and powerfully sung, in his deep and splendid voice. I admit that I was stirred. I had not known what to expect of this performance. In outlining his story, I have said little of his superb self-confidence, his unshakable belief that his father had wrecked the career of one of the most promising singers in the whole of Germany. As I listened, I could easily believe that this might have been true. His voice had great range and flexibility, as well as power; it was one that a much younger singer might well have been proud of.

At the close of the song, prolonged and hearty applause broke out. He rose and bowed in his courtly manner to right and left. I could see tears trickling down his great white beard, and gleaming in the lamplight. There was something inexpressibly pathetic, to me, in this makeshift of an audience, of a setting, that circumstances had forced him to accept and be content with; and yet it seemed to serve his purpose. Make-believe, if indulged in long enough by a man passionately eager to delude himself, may become almost as good as reality. So it was here, I think. What Herr Müller needed was an audience, the heartening sound of two hundred pairs of hands clapping vigorously at the close of each of his numbers. The rest he could himself provide. He had only to close his eyes to believe, for the moment at least, that all of his dreams had come true.

Naturally the thought came to me: How spontaneous is this applause? Remembering that these concerts had been taking place over a period of many years, I could imagine that his audience might have become bored with them. Furthermore, Polynesian music differs vastly from ours, and it was hard to believe that the Maruteans had ever cared greatly for Brahms, or Wagner, or Schubert, or Chopin. I watched with interest the faces of those near me, and, whatever the song or the

instrumental number, they remained as placid and seemingly unmoved as the coconut palms. I observed that the applause was always started by the same old man. As long as he clapped, the others clapped; when he stopped, they stopped. Herr Müller saw nothing of this, of course, and he may have known nothing of it. These weekly concerts were given by his royal command, but in my opinion he truly believed that the natives attended for the pleasure they derived from them and not because of the fear which his dominating character inspired.

VII

I shall pass quickly over the events of the following month. It was a busy, anxious, and happy time for me. Herr Müller had given us the use of one of his coral-cement copra houses for a studio. It stood on the lagoon beach, half a mile from his dwelling. There I installed my small electrical plant, my film driers, and the rest of our gear.

Herr Müller was kindness itself in helping us to get comfortably settled. At first he was like a child in his eagerness to see us at work; but as the days passed I became conscious of a change in his attitude. He tried hard not to show it, but I could see that he resented the new interest we had brought into the lives of his people. It deprived him, not of any of his authority, to be sure, but of the position he had held for so long in the very centre of the Marutea stage. I did everything possible to keep him there. Never did we miss attendance at his weekly concerts, and I saw to it that there should be no distractions for which we were responsible on those particular evenings. Nevertheless, I was not easy in mind, and worked as never before to complete the filming of the picture in the briefest possible time. With a host of such violent and capricious moods, anything was possible. What I feared, of course, was that he might command us to leave the island before the work was finished.

Days passed, and everything went smoothly. We had splendid luck. The weather — everything — was in our favor. As for the company, they surpassed my most hopeful expectations. Half a dozen rehearsals sufficed to show the natives what we wanted: simply a pictorial story of their lives as they lived it from day to day, — fishing, pearl diving, housebuilding, dancing, — all their individual and communal activities strung on the thread of a story concerning one family. They were wholly unselfconscious before the camera; not once in a dozen times was a retake necessary. I saw little of our host during working hours, but I passed more than one pleasant evening in his company. One day he sent me word that he was going on one of his periodical visits to another smaller village on an island fifteen miles distant across the lagoon. He was to be absent for ten days or longer.

In the midst of our work, while he was away, I all but forgot his existence. His son Otto acted as my interpreter and general factotum. Otto and I had struck up a warm friendship during the long voyage to Marutea, and it had grown since that time. It was interesting to see how he expanded and throve during his father's absence, and the effect was equally noticeable upon the rest of the people. They were like children who had been granted an unexpected holiday. Nearly everyone in the village belonged to my company, and by this time their interest in the picture was enormous.

Meanwhile, Crossland and Zimmerman had been working late every evening developing film. I was looking forward to projecting the pictures. I

wanted to show the company the results of our work, and I knew that I could better explain what remained to be done by letting them see themselves in the shots already taken. At last we were ready, and I informed the village that if they would come to the studio that evening I would show them what they had been doing all this while.

We rigged up our screen out of doors, against one of the walls of the copra house. The whole village came. Otto and perhaps half a dozen others had seen motion pictures at Tahiti when they had gone there with Herr Müller's schooner. The others had little conception of what would be forthcoming.

At first their astonishment was so great that they sat in complete silence; then they went half crazy with delight. They laughed, they yelled, they rushed up to the screen to convince themselves that those moving figures were merely pictures and not their own flesh and blood. I had to stop the show until we could quiet them down a little. Otto explained that they must remain seated and not throw their shadows on the screen.

We were in the midst of the performance when I heard, or thought I heard, the ringing of the bell at Herr Müller's house. I had a decidedly uneasy moment. I remembered that this was the usual evening for the weekly concert, but I had heard nothing of his return and knew that he was not expected back for several days. Zimmerman was at the camera. I strolled a little way down the beach and listened again for the bell. Not hearing it, I decided that I must have been mistaken. Certainly none of the audience had heard it, which was not strange, considering the noise they were making.

When the performance was over they begged to see it again. I was glad to comply, and while repeating it I explained to them, through Otto, the work yet to be done, and how the various scenes would fit into place when all had been taken. We were getting on famously. Otto was in the midst of one of his explanations when he stopped short as though he had been smitten dumb. Following his awe-struck glance, I saw his father standing at the rear of the crowd. He was in evening dress, his concert costume, and stood drawn up to his full height, his arms folded across his mighty chest. In one hand he grasped his ironwood walking stick.

Not a word was said. Otto began to move backward as though some mysterious force were pushing him away. He melted into the darkness. Every member of the audience followed him. They neither walked nor ran — they simply vanished, without a sound. Within thirty seconds the place was deserted except for Zimmerman at the camera, Herr Müller, and myself.

I was prepared for anything. I was prepared to see him step forward and smash our precious camera to bits. Had he offered to do so, I doubt whether Zimmerman or I would have lifted a finger to prevent him. I have spoken of his immense vitality. It was more than that; what, precisely, I cannot explain, but the influence, whatever it was, seemed to rob us, for the moment, of everything but the capacity to feel it. He came forward two or three paces, breathing heavily, as though he had run all the way from his house. He raised his ironwood stick and pointed it at me, and opened his mouth as though about to speak; but instead of doing so he turned and strode off into the darkness.

VIII

I passed a sleepless night. My first impulse had been to follow him, but upon second thought it seemed best to allow time for his anger to cool before

making any attempt to explain. I was certain that no one had been informed of his return. Had it been known, Otto would have told me. We were to have started work at daylight the next morning. No one came — not a soul. I waited for an hour, and then went along to the village.

A few children were playing about in the dooryards; otherwise the village street was deserted, but I saw faces peeping concernedly out at me as I went along. I found Otto and a younger brother, Walter, at the store. They greeted me in subdued, anxious voices. They had not dared speak to their father. He had forbidden the people to leave their houses without his permission. While they were telling me this we heard his tread on the staircase. The two sons, with frightened apologetic glances at me, disappeared into a back room.

I was ready to bring into play all the tact and diplomacy learned in twenty years of motion-picture directing. Fortunately they were not needed. All that I had to do was to point out that he himself was responsible for the failure of his people to attend his concert. He had returned home several days before he was expected, and late in the evening, after everyone had left the village to come to our picture show. I assured him that no one had heard the ringing of the bell. Strangely enough, this simple explanation had not even occurred to him.

'Mr. Forrest! What a fool I am!' he said. 'Yes, it is so! I am like my father. I lose my temper and then I remember nothing, not even why I have lost it! You will not be angry with me? You are working so hard to do a beautiful thing. You wish to show people in the great cities this lonely island and the life of my people, so strange, so romantic, and I . . .' He shook his head, ruefully. 'You will forgive me? Tell me, what can I do to show you how deeply I am sorry?'

Forgive him? Indeed I did, what little there was to forgive. When truly himself, he had the most charming manners — a gracious, old-world courtesy rarely met with anywhere. The difficult thing for me to realize, in all my dealings with him, was that I had to do with a man who, in many respects, had never grown up. Intellectually he was splendidly mature, and yet he had the capacity for intense suffering of a sensitive, imaginative child. With him a slight, however small, and whether fancied or real, grew in a moment to enormous proportions, completely overshadowing the light of his day. I almost envied him that virginity of spirit. Had it not been for his fearful temper, how wholly lovable he would have been!

Nothing would do then but we must have one of our long talks. I excused myself as delicately as possible.

'I was rather hoping to go on with a scene we started filming yesterday, Herr Müller, if the people could come . . . ?'

He slapped his forehead.

'*Donnerwetter!* I forget! Of course! You wish to work, and I have told them . . . *Ach, du lieber Gott*, what a man I am! Otto! Walter! Come! Come quickly!'

They appeared from the back room, and their father galvanized them into action at once. Walter ran up to ring the bell which hung at the end of the upper verandah. The natives came thronging from their houses on to the village recreation ground in front of the store. I wish that you might have heard him address them. He was now in his happiest mood; he laughed with them, joked with them, and the effect was immediate. If they feared him, it was very plain to me that they loved him as well.

'Now, Mr. Forrest, what will you have them do? *Ach*, how can you forgive me who make you waste so much of this beautiful morning? Along with you, Otto! No, wait! You shall stay at home. It is I who shall go with Mr. Forrest to-day. I shall work hard, hard! You will see. Come, my children, all of you!'

What a day it was! We accomplished more than in any four days previously. We filmed two scenes in particular that removed any doubts I may have had as to the ultimate success of the picture. I am prouder of that afternoon's work than of all my years of directing, either before or since, and the credit belongs to Herr Müller. He could have made a success of a dozen different careers, motion-picture directing among them. He knew by instinct what I wanted done; and with his knowledge of island life, and his deep insight into native character, he offered suggestions that were priceless to me.

IX

If only I could have let well enough alone! Well enough? It was vastly better than well enough. I had a feeling of deep obligation toward him, and in my desire to show it I blundered. My intentions were of the best, but I don't excuse myself. The consequences of that blunder were tragic.

You see, there was something more than pathetic, to me, in the immense need he had for his people's admiration and respect, not as a man and a leader, — that he could and did take for granted, — but as a musician, a singer of genius. He had brooded so long over his ruined career; his spiritual pain at the thought of it was, I am convinced, all but unbearable at times. It was softened somewhat by his belief that his gifts had not been entirely wasted; that even here, among children of nature whom most people would regard as little above savages, he could give pleasure by his singing. I realized more clearly every day how vital it was to his happiness that he should believe the Maruteans deeply loved his music. I wanted him to keep that illusion, if it was an illusion. It seemed to me that if I could help him keep it I should be doing as great a service as it is possible for one man to perform for another.

Well, I encouraged him to believe that our picture was nothing to his people in comparison with his music. He could not help seeing their interest, but I made light of it, and convinced him that it was merely the interest in novelty and would quickly pass. He was wistfully eager to believe me.

'You feel that, Mr. Forrest?' he said earnestly. His eyes lighted up with pleasure and he laid a hand affectionately on my shoulder. 'One sees that you are truly an artist! We know, you and I, that music stands first, *nicht wahr?* Yes, it is so, in all lands, with all peoples. It will always be so. Even here, among these Polynesians, there is this great passion for music.'

We were walking back through the groves, from the studio to his house. He halted and faced me. 'You know, we can prove that,' he said.

'How?' I asked.

'I tell you what we do,' he went on, eagerly. 'Some evening soon you will again show the pictures? . . . Good! Well, I will say to my people: "Mr. Forrest will show the new scenes he has been making with you. Do you wish to see them?" And they will say, "Yes." "Very well, my children," I will say; "those who wish to go may do so. I shall have my concert on this evening, but no matter; I wish you to do as you like. You shall see the pictures if that pleases you better, and I shall sing and play for myself."'

I at once realized the danger of this plan; but I tried not to show my alarm.

'Herr Müller,' I said, 'we should have not one spectator at our picture show.'

'*Gewiss!*' he said, laughing delightedly. 'I believe that, too, so much they love the music.'

'Then why prove what we both already know?'

'To make a little more sure. We have this wonderful chance; never again, perhaps, will it happen, anywhere. There are ignorant men, Mr. Forrest, who think these island people are savages who care only to eat and sleep. We know how wrong is their idea; and you can say, after you leave my island, when you hear their foolish talk, "But let me tell you what I *know*."'

There was no dissuading him. I tried in every possible way, only to increase his enthusiasm for the plan. He pressed me to set an evening for the double attraction. I delayed day after day, made excuse after excuse until further ones would not serve. He was not to be turned from his purpose, and at last I was compelled to comply. I had a possible resource in Otto. Although we had never spoken of the native attitude toward his father's music, I knew how he felt about it in his heart: that it was both fear and love that compelled attendance at the weekly concerts. I told him that he must warn the people, secretly, not to come to the studio on that evening, promising them another showing of pictures the following night.

Otto shook his head. 'My father would be sure to hear of it, Mr. Forrest, and he would be very angry. He would think you did not believe in the love of our people for his music, and wished to save him from being disappointed. He is a proud man; he would never forgive you for that. No, there is nothing we can do. It must be as he wishes.'

X

I made my preparations with a heavy heart. My hope was that the people would not take him at his word, or that a sense of loyalty to him would prevent their attendance. That hope soon faded. They came in twos and threes, in family groups, the girls and young men, the middle-aged. Only the Müller children and a few of the old people were missing; otherwise all the natives were seated on the ground before the screen, eagerly waiting for us to begin. If they were at all worried as to what Herr Müller would think, it was not apparent in their manner. For the moment, at least, they seemed to have quite forgotten him. At another time I should have enjoyed the animation of that scene, but my heart was with Herr Müller. I recalled his words: 'On that evening, Mr. Forrest, I shall have a great emotion, a very great emotion. I shall sing as never before.' I dared not think of the great empty square before his house. But the harm was done, now. There was nothing for it but to proceed with our show.

Crossland was at the camera; I had sent Zimmerman to attend the concert. I remained at the studio only long enough to inspect one bit of film I had been particularly anxious to see; then I set out for the village as fast as I could walk. We had the same wildly appreciative audience. I could hear their shouts of delight long after I had left the studio.

Herr Müller was singing when I arrived; the song was 'Heilige Nacht.' It was only then that I remembered we were in Christmas week; there were no seasonable reminders at Marutea. I forgot the tropics as I listened to that timeless old song. I had never before

heard it sung by a man; I did n't suppose that it could be. Now I know that only a man — if he be German, with the voice of a Müller — can sing it as it should be sung. It was lovely, unspeakably so. It seemed to me that I was hearing it for the first time. As I listened I forgot time and place, and all my anxieties.

When it was finished I came back with an effort to the little world of Marutea lost in the wastes of the Pacific. The great square before Herr Müller's house was all but empty. The Müller children were present, and a dozen or fifteen of the old people. All applauded heartily, and I clapped till the palms of my hands burned, but the effect, in volume, was nothing compared to what was customary at these concerts. Herr Müller rose and bowed, but he seemed scarcely aware of our presence at the moment. He was deeply stirred; the spell he had cast upon one, at least, of his audience was upon him as well.

I sought out Zimmerman immediately. In a rapidly whispered conference he told me that Herr Müller had given no indication that he was aware of the smallness of his audience. As a matter of fact, they had spread themselves over a wide area in an effort to make their numbers appear much larger than they were. That was Otto's doing, undoubtedly. The moon was again in its second quarter and the light fell in pools and splashes among the trees. It would have been easy for Herr Müller to be deceived as to the numbers of his audience, the more so because his eyes were accustomed to the brilliant light from his vapor lamp. I tried to persuade myself that he was deceived. Believing that the situation might yet be saved, I asked Zimmerman to hurry back to the studio and stop our performance, telling the people to come at once to the concert. However, thinking of the distance, I was apprehensive. Twenty minutes at least would pass before any of them could appear.

Meanwhile, Herr Müller proceeded with the concert. He sang next one of Heine's lyrics set to music by himself. It was as fragrant of a northern spring as an apple tree in blossom. I tell you, the man *was* a genius! I could easily imagine him in Carnegie Hall in New York, the place filled with sophisticated music lovers, and every one of them deeply moved, as the human heart will always be moved by simple and beautiful things. Again I applauded like a dozen men, and so did the others. The applause was genuine, too; at least mine was. A tenderness welled up in my heart, a deep longing to please the fine old fellow; to make good to him, somehow, all his years of loneliness, of homesickness, of unrealized dreams. This time he did not rise from his stool; he seemed to be in a deep reverie. Then he played the Moonlight Sonata.

Ghosts of old memories, of places, people, evoked by associations the music had for me, came thronging back. It was strange indeed to think that there could be no such memories for the others of that tiny gathering. I thought: 'Never shall I forget this! Never! From this night on, the Moonlight Sonata will mean Marutea to me.' And so it does; so it always will. If ever my memories of the island grow dim, I shall know how to conjure up again all its loneliness and beauty.

Of a sudden the music was broken off, in the middle of a bar. I looked up quickly. Herr Müller had risen from his stool. He came to the verandah railing and stood looking down at us. Then, in a low dead voice, he said, 'Go home. I shall play no more'; and, without waiting to see his command obeyed, he disappeared through a doorway.

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XI

The little gathering dispersed; they seemed to float away rather than to walk. There were a dozen Müller children, married and unmarried, from the ages of forty-odd to eighteen. Two of the younger ones lived with their father; the others had homes of their own near by. They stood for a moment, conversing in whispers, looking toward the house. The intense white light from the vapor lamp seemed to spill like water over the piano keys to the floor, and the instrument cast a block of impenetrable shadow on the other side. I felt suddenly weary, emptied of the desire or the capacity for thought. I rose and made my way slowly to the beach, walking on for a hundred yards or so; there I sat down facing the lagoon, with my back to a tree. A few moments later I saw someone approaching. It was Otto. He sat down beside me. Presently he said, 'He is in his bedroom, Mr. Forrest, walking up and down. I am afraid when he is like this.'

'What do you think we should do, Otto?'

'Nothing. We must wait and see.'

From far down the beach we heard a murmur of voices. The people were returning from our picture show. Otto hurried along to meet them, to tell them to go very quietly to their houses. They separated in silence among the groves; those who lived on the farther side of the village kept to the beach as they passed Herr Müller's house. Within five minutes the last of them had gone.

It was useless to think of sleep. Otto and I wandered away from the house and back to it half a dozen times during the next two hours. The vapor lamp still burned. We were like moths attracted to it again and again.

It must have been well after midnight that we came for the last time, standing in the deep shade, waiting, listening, hearing nothing. We were about to move away for another quarter of an hour of aimless wandering when the curtains at one of the doorways parted and Herr Müller came out. His movements were like those of a sleepwalker. He sat down on the piano stool with his back to the instrument, his elbows on his knees, his chin resting in his hands. He remained motionless for a long time. Suddenly he turned to the piano, squaring his shoulders proudly. I could not see his face, only his magnificent head with its mass of thick snow-white hair, clearly outlined in the brilliant light of the lamp. He let his hands fall lightly on the keys, striking a chord that I can hear to this day. The music of the mingled notes had in it a quality of unutterable loneliness; it was as though some desolate spirit of mid-ocean had uttered a cry of profound despair.

That was all — a single chord. Silence flowed in again; I could hear the faint hiss of the vapor lamp. We waited, and I was hoping that he would play, finding an outlet in music for whatever emotion gripped him. Instead of that he sprang from the stool with an inarticulate cry that froze my blood. He disappeared within doors and returned with an axe in his hand.

How am I to describe what happened next? Have you ever seen and heard a piano being murdered? I am not speaking of piano music done to death by a novice. No — of the instrument itself, beaten, chopped, hacked, splintered, mangled, with an axe wielded by a man with the strength of a giant and the demoniac passion of . . . of nothing human. I doubt whether such a thing had ever happened before, anywhere in the world. With all his

enormous strength he swung the axe again, and again, and again, and again — first on the keyboard, then on the beautiful body of the piano whose wood had been so permeated, so mellowed with music through the years. It was as though one were watching a god, who had created order and beauty and harmony, seized of a sudden by the horrible need to destroy all that he had won from chaos and night, himself with it. I leave you to imagine, if you can, the tortured cries that came from the instrument at each blow.

How long its agony lasted I do not know — possibly two or three minutes, though the time seemed endless to me. Then Herr Müller hurled the axe away from him. It flew far out, whirling round and round, and fell not a dozen paces from where Otto and I were standing. When I looked again toward the verandah, Herr Müller had crouched behind what was left of the instrument. The mangled corpse of it was heaved up on two legs, and it was hurled rather than pushed across the verandah. The railings splintered like matchwood at the impact, and the instrument fell with a rending crash to the ground, fifteen feet below.

Otto and I had stood, deprived of the power of thought or movement by the horror of what we saw. Now he cried out, 'Oh, Mr. Forrest! To-morrow! To-morrow!' I knew what he meant.

But there was to be no to-morrow for his father. He was mercifully spared the anguish he would have known at the realization of what he had done. He swayed for a second or two at the very edge of the verandah, outlined in silhouette against the light of the vapor lamp. Suddenly he raised his hands to his head, staggered back two or three paces, and fell.

Regaining our power of action, Otto and I ran to the outdoor stairway at the end of the verandah, but we were not the first to reach him. He was lying as he had fallen, but his head was resting in the lap of a lovely old lady who I knew at once must be Mrs. Müller, although I had never seen her before. She paid no attention to us; she was not aware of our presence. She was seated cross-legged on the floor, running her slim brown fingers through his hair. His face looked as peaceful as that of a child asleep.

'*Auél Auél Otto iti él Auél Auél!*'

I shall never be able to forget that little wailing cry, so tender, so infinitely melancholy, repeated over and over again. 'Alas! Alas!' Words other than those were useless. There was nothing more to be said.

He must have burst a blood vessel in his brain. However that may be, he was dead. I remained in the house only long enough to be certain of this. The place was now filling with people; I was neither wanted nor needed there. I made my way down the stairs and through the throng gathered outside, to the beach.

The director of motion pictures ended his story at this point. No one spoke for a moment or two; then someone asked, in a tentative, apologetic voice: 'You finished the picture?'

'Yes,' he replied, rising. 'I was obliged to do that.'

THE NEW ASCETICISM

BY WILLARD L. SPERRY

I

In Lecky's *History of European Morals* there is a painful chapter describing the rise of monasticism in the Egyptian desert during the second and third centuries of our era. Lecky is a renowned writer of historical fiction, and very readable fiction it is too, but in this instance his statements are all documented and may be verified in the sources.

So Saint Jerome tells us of one monk who lived half a lifetime on a small daily portion of barley bread washed down by water from a mud hole, and of another monk who wore his tunic until it rotted off him, exposing a starved body with skin like pumice stone. For six months Saint Macarius slept naked in a marsh to court the stings of poisonous insects. His disciple Saint Eusebius lodged at the bottom of a dry well, and whenever he went abroad carried on his back a hundred and fifty pounds of iron. Saint Simeon Stylites had knotted his girdle so tight around his middle that it was embedded in putrefying flesh. Meanwhile he passed his life on the top of his pillar bowing rapidly in prayer. One day an interested bystander tried to keep track of these pious calisthenics; but he gave up in sheer boredom at the 1244th genuflection. An anchorite in the desert thought that he had seen the Devil, as he caught sight of a naked figure, its body black with filth and its wild white hair streaming in the wind, but it was only Saint Mary of Egypt, a once beautiful woman of Alexandria.

Lecky brings the roster to a close with this critical comment: 'There is no phase of the moral history of mankind of deeper and more painful interest than this. . . . A hideous, sordid, and emaciated maniac; without patriotism, without natural affection, passing his life in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture, had become the ideal of the nations which had known the writings of Plato and Cicero, and the lives of Socrates and Cato.' He might have added, also, that this maniac claimed to be the true and only heir of the religion of Jesus.

This primitive asceticism was a complex fact. Many motives prompted it, some of them very obscure; but at least three are patent.

The word itself was used in religion as a metaphor taken over from the playing fields of Greece. Asceticism was the voluntary training into which the athlete went, to fit himself for his contests. Paul makes constant use of this figure to describe the Christian attitude toward the body, and speaks of himself variously as a runner, a boxer, a wrestler. He kept the body under to give the soul its chance. But in Pauline religion, as in pagan athletics, the body is not deprecated; it is trained to be the useful servant of a higher principle, and as such is declared good.

Christianity, however, had been early

and markedly influenced by Gnosticism, a religion which came neither from Palestine nor from Greece, but from the darker East. This religion was candidly dualistic, and taught the excellence of spiritual things as a foil to its initial dogma of the inherent evil of all matter. The body, being man's most intimate and constant experience of matter, is to be visited with gratuitous cruelties, simply to show the contempt which it merits. In the long history of religion, dualism is never scotched and tends to become an antinomian short cut to licentiousness. But in the Egyptian desert we find it in its early form of sincere self-discipline, wanting the final paradox of subtle self-indulgence. The asceticism which proceeds from this dualistic premise holds that the body is bad and can serve no good purpose; the more cruelly the saint treats it, the sooner he will be quit of it.

And finally that strange outbreak plainly shows the familiar signs of mental perversion. We can discern there a pathological variant of the normal human desire to escape pain, manifesting itself as the desire to inflict pain upon one's self and others. In this voluntary getting and giving of pain the abnormal mind finds a morbid pleasure. We now have our technical terms for these perversions and are agreed that they fall outside the boundaries of sanity and virtue.

So we reread this ancient story with a detached and curious interest. Its items have to do with a remote conception of the religious life, which has few parallels or none in our own time. The practices which the Church Fathers approved and which Lecky has recounted would be an anachronism were they to be revived to-day. William James, it is true, tries to persuade us that Carlyle did Tyndall a good moral turn by getting him into a cold bath every morning of a freezing Berlin winter, but the best medical and ethical opinion of the day sanctions the mitigation to be had from the hot tap.

The truth is that Francis Thompson has come very near to saying the last word on asceticism. There may have been in the heroic past, he writes, robust and truculent natures whose hot blood demanded these austerities, 'but to our generation uncompromising fasts and severities of conduct are found to be piteously alien; not because, as rash censors say, we are too luxurious, but because we are too nervous, intricate, devitalized. We find our austerities ready made. The east wind has replaced discipline, dyspepsia the hair shirt. . . . The pride of life is no more; to live is itself an ascetic exercise. . . . Man is his own mortification. Merely to front existence is a surrender of self, a choice of ineludibly rigorous abnegation.' So we close our Lecky and open our Thompson, grateful that this old unhappy far-off chapter of man's moral trial and error is ended.

II

I had taken all this for granted, too, until a friend of mine made the other day a very provocative remark. He said, 'I think that we are living in one of the most ascetic periods of the world's history. But there is this important difference between the asceticism of the past and that of the present: in the old days, in the name of religion and morality, men were hard on their bodies; to-day, in the same name, they are relatively easy on their bodies but are hard on their minds. We belong to a generation which goes out of its way to make mental trouble for itself just in those areas where peace of mind is most essential, and this new intellectual asceticism is raising all over again the initial problem of the nature of ascetic

practices and the validity of the ascetic ideal.'

Now this is precisely the sort of critical insight into a human situation which carries its own credentials with it. We instantly pay it the full tribute of wondering why we never thought of it ourselves. For plainly, while the lines have fallen to Brother Ass the Body in pleasant places, — and he has never had so many concessions and cosmetics, — we do not let our minds off half so easily. Modern thought has a strange masochistic twist which is by no means uniformly required by the facts.

Thus, in the most characteristic service of our religion, we are, at one point, invited to hear what comfortable words our Saviour says. The modern man no sooner receives this gracious invitation than his mind leaps instantly on guard. The history of religion, as he reads it, is largely the record of those who said, 'Peace, peace; when there is no peace.' Ecclesiastics, to his way of thinking, have already built far too many basilicas by peddling cheap and spurious indulgences to the crowd. The man of to-day is carrying the task of the Reformation to its logical conclusion by trying to rid religion of its stubborn traffic in intellectual self-indulgence. The newer knowledge of the devious ways of the human mind tells him that he must suspect his own wishful thinking as being an escape from reality rather than the gateway to reality.

The truth is that most of us moderns are comfortable only when listening to religion's uncomfortable words. The very fact that the natural man in us inclines to clutch at the promises is enough to persuade our higher man that these promises are probably illusory. In our troubled moments we share Angel Clare's hunger to rest upon the words of the Nazarene, 'Let not your heart be troubled.' But in our more resolute moods we suspect that Hardy was right in not giving his hero this assurance, at least too easily. Tell us that life is brief, bitter, and meaningless; that there is little good and much evil in the world; that the spoils of virtue are ephemeral; that we must prepare our souls for corrosive doubts which will cost us the dearest articles of our hereditary faith — tell us these and other things to the same intent and our minds are quite at home. We come to mental attention and muster our portion of the racial reserves of Stoicism, prepared to deal manfully with the stern actualities of a brief life in an unideal world. The utmost which many intelligent and upright persons hope for themselves, religiously and morally, is that they may lay down their lives, like Captain Scott on the Antarctic Ice Barrier, fighting it out to the end and dying like gentlemen. 'Optimism is cowardice,' says Spengler in his latest jeremiad. 'Our duty is to hold on to the lost position, like that Roman soldier whose bones were found in front of a door in Pompeii, who, during the eruption of Vesuvius, died at his post because they forgot to relieve him. That is greatness. That is what it means to be a thoroughbred. The honorable end is the one thing that can *not* be taken from a man.'

Something of this sort is the new asceticism of the mind, plainly operative and vastly perplexing. Now what is the meaning of this asceticism? The student of human affairs usually approaches his examination of a baffling contemporary fact by way of a dispassionate examination of some parallel fact in the past. True, history never repeats itself, and every human situation, like every human life, is an individual event never anticipated and never to occur again. Yet types of character and situation tend to recur, and, though they may vary in their particular permutations and combina-

tions, the generic elements are fairly constant. So, in the present instance, we find clues as to the nature and validity of this new asceticism by comparing it with the old asceticism.

We discover at once that this new intellectual asceticism of our time, like the prior ascetic discipline of the body, is a complex rather than a simple fact. We find further the same three strains bred into it: a healthy athleticism, a candid dualism, and morbid perversion. Of these three types of asceticism we continue to approve the first and to challenge the rest.

III

All that is valid in the new asceticism we owe to the scientific mind. Wherever you open the autobiographies of the natural scientists of the nineteenth century you come upon the common confession that their first task was that of a rigorous intellectual self-discipline. They had to rid their minds of stubborn presuppositions and hereditary inaccuracies of observation, many of them centuries old, before they could see what was actually there. To this end they trained themselves to begin their inquiry by doubting their first impressions and inferences. They held that the Prince of Error manifested himself most insidiously to them in their unexamined axioms and in their too hasty hypotheses, and that these therefore must be criticized most mercilessly. Only by such hardness on their own minds could they come at truth. 'The world little knows,' says Faraday, 'how many of the thoughts and theories that have passed through the mind of the scientific investigator have been crushed in silence by his own severe and adverse examination.'

But this asceticism of the natural sciences rests upon the conviction that the mind is sound and can know the truth. Darwin's attitude toward his mind was substantially that of Paul toward his body. He kept his mind in subjection precisely because it was a good mind. There is among the natural scientists of the first rank no basic skepticism as to the mind's innate dignity and ultimate excellence. There is here a healthy respect for hard thinking, and a deep joy in it. Hence your pure scientist, dealing with the order of objective nature, is habitually a man of 'cheerful yesterdays and confident tomorrows.' No one can live in any contemporary academic society without being struck by the mental serenity, as well as the mental austerity, of the men who are working in the natural sciences. They are hard on their own minds and on the minds of others, but they are neither cynics nor pessimistic philosophers. Within the limits of their restricted inquiry they seem to find the world reliable and reassuring; hence they incline to glorify and to enjoy the universe.

In so far as our morals and religion are destined to become scientific, or at least subject to the scrutiny of the sciences, this intellectual asceticism must have in these spiritual realms a permanent validity. The day has gone when the supposed revelations of religion can be put out of bounds for scientific study. Indeed it is in these very areas that the innate human tendency to ascetic practices seems to be finding its full and final occasion. We now have at hand an apparatus which, though not yet able to discover reality, is fully competent to identify and to eliminate the disproportionate mass of error which has found lodgment in our creeds and codes. The factual untruth and the fallacious inference are being steadily eliminated from the hereditary body of religious faith and moral practice. This negative service of science to religion is very great. If it does not

build us the City of God out of hand, it is clearing away much rubbish from the cities of destruction.

Therefore we gladly buffet our too credulous minds as Paul buffeted his too carnal body. We will cleanse them of their immature love of myths and legends and we will require them in the name of religion and morality to make their devout submission to what is so. We will bow to Huxley's hard common sense: 'I observe that the truth is not much affected by our likes and dislikes.' Furthermore we will not tamper with the integrity of our own mental processes, even for the sake of spiritual comfort. 'Above all,' says the old monk in the *Brothers Karamazov*, 'this above all, don't lie to yourself.' Since all deception, according to the mediæval mystic, begins in self-deception, we will not, even for religion's sake, lie to ourselves. As a hard bed is healthier than a soft one, the human mind seems to be so constituted that it rests more securely upon the stern actualities of things than upon the soft illusions of romanticism. This much, at least, the scientific spirit has done for religion; it has taught us to make our submission to fact, and, even though our faith must still go beyond fact, it shall never again do violence to fact. When Professor Lowes says that the truths of poetry cannot be falsehoods for science, he is stating a religious as well as an æsthetic axiom. In the preliminary intellectual self-discipline required for this submission, the ascetic impulse seems at last to have found its range and so to have found itself. With this newer asceticism, derived mainly from the natural sciences, we have no quarrel, and to it we owe whatever vital mysticism there is in modern life.

IV

But the moment we pass from the natural sciences to the less exact sciences, and from the less exact sciences to the humanities, the new asceticism becomes problematical. The border-line sciences which have to do with human nature, character, and institutions can never be as dispassionate as those dealing with the natural order, since the observer unconsciously imputes his own uncriticized individuality to the fact he investigates. And when we come to the arts we are confronted with thinking which is frankly selective rather than candid and dispassionate. The artist does not attempt to be fair-minded; he deliberately sets out to tell one truth from among many, and for the moment subordinates all other truths in the galaxy to that.

Modern realism in the arts presupposes the artist's right to choose his own material, in this instance material which, were we to consult our own native inclination, we should prefer not to employ. The world of romantic and wishful thinking died with Victor Hugo. With Zola the world of art began to smell strongly of cheese, and cheese that was high. Since that time, because we pride ourselves on our scientific thinking, we have supinely accepted every unpleasantness which realistic art has forced upon us simply on the ground that it can be shown to have a warrant in fact. We have felt it our moral duty to concede up to the hilt the pain, sorrow, sordidness, and nastiness of things.

So much has this become, in the holy name of science, our mental habit that we have forgotten what we should always remember, that realism of this genre is a selective art and not a dispassionate science. As long ago as the fifth century, Saint Augustine asked in his *Confessions* why we like to see on the stage tragedies which we should not wish to suffer ourselves. There is, it is true, the old dramatic dogma about the vicarious purging of the emotions. But

that is no longer relevant. In so far as we know our present mind, we endure these slings and arrows of outrageous realism, not for its emotionally cathartic value, but solely because we must admit its factual truth.

Hence the modern realist has made capital of the stubborn and almost ineradicable tendency of the human creature to inflict pain upon himself, in this instance mental pain. And he has justified his wares by getting for them scientific certification. But he has never betrayed his professional secret — that he is always a selective artist and never a dispassionate scientist. There was, for example, a very great but relatively obscure novelist named Mark Rutherford, writing in England just at the time when nineteenth-century realism was gathering momentum. His chief characteristic is a certain cool candor. 'No theory of the world is possible. The storm, the rain slowly rotting the harvest, the children sickening in cellars are obvious; but equally obvious are an evening in June, the delight of men and women in one another, in music and in the exercise of thought.' This was heresy in an age when realism had become the whole gospel, and Mark Rutherford was condemned to obscurity and neglect. For realism could not afford to concede the evening in June and joy in music and in thought. As for the delight of men and women in one another, the perfect work of realism is never done until that delight has been turned into disillusionment and mutual disgust.

Many of us owe much, very much, to Thomas Hardy, yet we are never quite able to down the disloyal suspicion that his President of the Immortals, who sets the stage and plans the action for his puppets, operates upon a too uniformly cruel principle. The agony is patently manufactured rather than observed and transcribed. And this heretical conviction of ours is grounded, not upon any residual sentimentality, but merely upon fair-mindedness. In the Wessex novels the ascetic impulse has become too highly selective to carry the whole consent of candor, however it may stir the emotion of pity. I have never forgotten meeting an undergraduate roaming around Harvard Yard in patent distress, and asking him what the matter was. He said he had just read that chapter in *Jude the Obscure* in which the two children are found hanged on the door. 'It is n't fair!' he cried with bitter protest. 'It is n't fair of Hardy to do that to me!' He was right; for all his power, Hardy is n't fair, with the fairness of science.

So when this ascetic realism puts on the purple of philosophy, it still remains a selective art, not a dispassionate science. The orthodox and classical statement of such asceticism is the familiar passage from Bertrand Russell's *Free Man's Worship:* 'That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievements must inevitably be buried beneath the débris of a universe in ruins — all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundations of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.'

Now it goes without saying that this is highly sophisticated thinking. The natural man, however badly he may

think of life, does not think as badly as that. Only a long process of mental self-discipline, raised to the point of pain voluntarily self-inflicted on the mind, could arrive at such conclusions. And all the affinities of this type of pessimistic philosophy are with the arts rather than with the sciences, since it chooses its own themes.

One becomes accustomed, after a while, to suspect the infallibility of the printed page and to read it as a clue to the mind to which it is addressed rather than as a transcript of reality. The Fourth Gospel tells us even more about the Ephesian Church than about Christ. So Mr. Bertrand Russell's grim account of things tells us more about our own minds than about any final things-in-themselves. The public presupposed by that now well-known and popular essay has a mind which is habitually hard on itself, and is comfortable only when on the rack of doubt and disillusionment. When Matthew Arnold spoke of a 'wounded human spirit turning here on its bed of pain' he was prophesying the kind of mind upon which realism was to trade.

This pain, accepted at first because scientific candor required it, has now become so much a matter of mental habit that it yields to many minds a morbid pleasure. The realism of the last decade has not hesitated to exploit our liability to perversion. It is not for us to indict the artists themselves, but if they have not unconsciously drifted into mental abnormality, they have been consciously serving a public in which intellectual perverts are numerous enough to meet the demands of the box office. And the pity of it is that what was at first an athletic desire to discipline the mind becomes a doubt as to its worth and a strange pleasure at its proved worthlessness. The logic, whether of the body or the mind, whether on the Nile or on Broadway, whether in the third century or the twentieth, is the same. And it is hard to see why a method for life, which by common consent is declared folly when addressed to Brother Ass the Body, should become wisdom when applied to Sister Ass the Mind. Saint Mary of Egypt was a pitiable sight with her wild white hair streaming in the wind and her naked body black with filth. There was no call for her to forfeit her native beauty. But the minds of many modern artists are equally pathetic. Their bias toward realism has ceased to be a recognition of neglected half truths and has become a dogma and an obsession. The pain which the modern mind has accepted in the name of scientific candor is one thing, but that which it has voluntarily selected in the name of art is another and a far more dubious thing.

V

This modern cult of mental pain, like the ancient cult of bodily pain, is now reaching the point of satiety and self-defeat. It should be noted that voluntary ascetics are usually recruited from the ranks of the comfortable and well-to-do, since asceticism is always the habit of the world-weary. It was, at the first and in its excesses, an importation into Christianity from decadent civilizations sated with bread and the games; not the daily moral necessity of the Galilean carpenter shop or the tent-maker's booth in Tarsus. Modern realism had much the same origin. While it is true that many of its first spokesmen worked in garrets and died in cellars, the public which has given them their vogue has been recruited from the over-comfortable. Modern realism was the product of the fat years from the mid-nineteenth century up to the war. In these leaner times this realism is a cultural hang-over, a moral superfluity. It is to-day merely an insult gratui-

tously added to the injury of the last two decades. In short, intellectual asceticism is fast becoming an anachronism.

Not that romanticism or comfortable and complacent religion will return in its old glory — not that. Rather that Mr. Lippmann has prophesied the nature of the high religion and high morality of the future — they will be ways of thinking and acting inspired by a genuine dispassionateness. Where dispassionateness prevails, there self-inflicted pain, whether addressed to the body or to the mind, falls out of bounds. For a catholic candor forbids selective art from trading in the name of truth upon man's curious tendency to hurt himself. The hurt which life and the world do him is part of the given fact; the hurt which he voluntarily inflicts upon himself is no part of the data; and only as he learns to distinguish between the necessary suffering given in the order of nature and the unnecessary suffering invited by the arts can he escape from this newest form of the old ascetic delusion. We look to the candor of science rather than the comforts of religion to dispel the intellectual asceticism of our time; but why quarrel about terms? Is not the candor of science part of the ultimate comfort of religion? As the Wise Man of Ancient Israel said, 'Afflict not thyself in thine own counsel.'

THREE DAYS TO SEE

BY HELEN KELLER

I

All of us have read thrilling stories in which the hero had only a limited and specified time to live. Sometimes it was as long as a year; sometimes as short as twenty-four hours. But always we were interested in discovering just how the doomed man chose to spend his last days or his last hours. I speak, of course, of free men who have a choice, not condemned criminals whose sphere of activities is strictly delimited.

Such stories set us thinking, wondering what we should do under similar circumstances. What events, what experiences, what associations, should we crowd into those last hours as mortal beings? What happiness should we find in reviewing the past, what regrets?

Sometimes I have thought it would be an excellent rule to live each day as if we should die to-morrow. Such an attitude would emphasize sharply the values of life. We should live each day with a gentleness, a vigor, and a keenness of appreciation which are often lost when time stretches before us in the constant panorama of more days and months and years to come. There are those, of course, who would adopt the epicurean motto of 'Eat, drink, and be merry,' but most people would be chastened by the certainty of impending death.

In stories, the doomed hero is usually

saved at the last minute by some stroke of fortune, but almost always his sense of values is changed. He becomes more appreciative of the meaning of life and its permanent spiritual values. It has often been noted that those who live, or have lived, in the shadow of death bring a mellow sweetness to everything they do.

Most of us, however, take life for granted. We know that one day we must die, but usually we picture that day as far in the future. When we are in buoyant health, death is all but unimaginable. We seldom think of it. The days stretch out in an endless vista. So we go about our petty tasks, hardly aware of our listless attitude toward life.

The same lethargy, I am afraid, characterizes the use of all our faculties and senses. Only the deaf appreciate hearing, only the blind realize the manifold blessings that lie in sight. Particularly does this observation apply to those who have lost sight and hearing in adult life. But those who have never suffered impairment of sight or hearing seldom make the fullest use of these blessed faculties. Their eyes and ears take in all sights and sounds hazily, without concentration and with little appreciation. It is the same old story of not being grateful for what we have until we lose it, of not being conscious of health until we are ill.

I have often thought it would be a blessing if each human being were stricken blind and deaf for a few days at some time during his early adult life. Darkness would make him more appreciative of sight; silence would teach him the joys of sound.

Now and then I have tested my seeing friends to discover what they see. Recently I was visited by a very good friend who had just returned from a long walk in the woods, and I asked her what she had observed. 'Nothing in particular,' she replied. I might have been incredulous had I not been accustomed to such responses, for long ago I became convinced that the seeing see little.

How was it possible, I asked myself, to walk for an hour through the woods and see nothing worthy of note? I who cannot see find hundreds of things to interest me through mere touch. I feel the delicate symmetry of a leaf. I pass my hands lovingly about the smooth skin of a silver birch, or the rough, shaggy bark of a pine. In spring I touch the branches of trees hopefully in search of a bud, the first sign of awakening Nature after her winter's sleep. I feel the delightful, velvety texture of a flower, and discover its remarkable convolutions; and something of the miracle of Nature is revealed to me. Occasionally, if I am very fortunate, I place my hand gently on a small tree and feel the happy quiver of a bird in full song. I am delighted to have the cool waters of a brook rush through my open fingers. To me a lush carpet of pine needles or spongy grass is more welcome than the most luxurious Persian rug. To me the pageant of seasons is a thrilling and unending drama, the action of which streams through my finger tips.

At times my heart cries out with longing to see all these things. If I can get so much pleasure from mere touch, how much more beauty must be revealed by sight. Yet, those who have eyes apparently see little. The panorama of color and action which fills the world is taken for granted. It is human, perhaps, to appreciate little that which we have and to long for that which we have not, but it is a great pity that in the world of light the gift of sight is used only as a mere convenience rather than as a means of adding fullness to life.

If I were the president of a university

I should establish a compulsory course in 'How to Use Your Eyes.' The professor would try to show his pupils how they could add joy to their lives by really seeing what passes unnoticed before them. He would try to awake their dormant and sluggish faculties.

II

Perhaps I can best illustrate by imagining what I should most like to see if I were given the use of my eyes, say, for just three days. And while I am imagining, suppose you, too, set your mind to work on the problem of how you would use your own eyes if you had only three more days to see. If with the oncoming darkness of the third night you knew that the sun would never rise for you again, how would you spend those three precious intervening days? What would you most want to let your gaze rest upon?

I, naturally, should want most to see the things which have become dear to me through my years of darkness. You, too, would want to let your eyes rest long on the things that have become dear to you so that you could take the memory of them with you into the night that loomed before you.

If, by some miracle, I were granted three seeing days, to be followed by a relapse into darkness, I should divide the period into three parts.

On the first day, I should want to see the people whose kindness and gentleness and companionship have made my life worth living. First I should like to gaze long upon the face of my dear teacher, Mrs. Anne Sullivan Macy, who came to me when I was a child and opened the outer world to me. I should want not merely to see the outline of her face, so that I could cherish it in my memory, but to study that face and find in it the living evidence of the sympathetic tenderness and patience with which she accomplished the difficult task of my education. I should like to see in her eyes that strength of character which has enabled her to stand firm in the face of difficulties, and that compassion for all humanity which she has revealed to me so often.

I do not know what it is to see into the heart of a friend through that 'window of the soul,' the eye. I can only 'see' through my finger tips the outline of a face. I can detect laughter, sorrow, and many other obvious emotions. I know my friends from the feel of their faces. But I cannot really picture their personalities by touch. I know their personalities, of course, through other means, through the thoughts they express to me, through whatever of their actions are revealed to me. But I am denied that deeper understanding of them which I am sure would come through sight of them, through watching their reactions to various expressed thoughts and circumstances, through noting the immediate and fleeting reactions of their eyes and countenance.

Friends who are near to me I know well, because through the months and years they reveal themselves to me in all their phases; but of casual friends I have only an incomplete impression, an impression gained from a handclasp, from spoken words which I take from their lips with my finger tips, or which they tap into the palm of my hand.

How much easier, how much more satisfying it is for you who can see to grasp quickly the essential qualities of another person by watching the subtleties of expression, the quiver of a muscle, the flutter of a hand. But does it ever occur to you to use your sight to see into the inner nature of a friend or acquaintance? Do not most of you seeing people grasp casually the outward features of a face and let it go at that?

For instance, can you describe accurately the faces of five good friends? Some of you can, but many cannot. As an experiment, I have questioned husbands of long standing about the color of their wives' eyes, and often they express embarrassed confusion and admit that they do not know. And, incidentally, it is a chronic complaint of wives that their husbands do not notice new dresses, new hats, and changes in household arrangements.

The eyes of seeing persons soon become accustomed to the routine of their surroundings, and they actually see only the startling and spectacular. But even in viewing the most spectacular sights the eyes are lazy. Court records reveal every day how inaccurately 'eyewitnesses' see. A given event will be 'seen' in several different ways by as many witnesses. Some see more than others, but few see everything that is within the range of their vision.

Oh, the things that I should see if I had the power of sight for just three days!

The first day would be a busy one. I should call to me all my dear friends and look long into their faces, imprinting upon my mind the outward evidences of the beauty that is within them. I should let my eyes rest, too, on the face of a baby, so that I could catch a vision of the eager, innocent beauty which precedes the individual's consciousness of the conflicts which life develops.

And I should like to look into the loyal, trusting eyes of my dogs — the grave, canny little Scottie, Darkie, and the stalwart, understanding Great Dane, Helga, whose warm, tender, and playful friendships are so comforting to me.

On that busy first day I should also view the small simple things of my home. I want to see the warm colors in the rugs under my feet, the pictures on the walls, the intimate trifles that transform a house into home. My eyes would rest respectfully on the books in raised type which I have read, but they would be more eagerly interested in the printed books which seeing people can read, for during the long night of my life the books I have read and those which have been read to me have built themselves into a great shining lighthouse, revealing to me the deepest channels of human life and the human spirit.

In the afternoon of that first seeing day, I should take a long walk in the woods and intoxicate my eyes on the beauties of the world of Nature, trying desperately to absorb in a few hours the vast splendor which is constantly unfolding itself to those who can see. On the way home from my woodland jaunt my path would lie near a farm so that I might see the patient horses ploughing in the field (perhaps I should see only a tractor!) and the serene content of men living close to the soil. And I should pray for the glory of a colorful sunset.

When dusk had fallen, I should experience the double delight of being able to see by artificial light, which the genius of man has created to extend the power of his sight when Nature decrees darkness.

In the night of that first day of sight, I should not be able to sleep, so full would be my mind of the memories of the day.

III

The next day — the second day of sight — I should arise with the dawn and see the thrilling miracle by which night is transformed into day. I should behold with awe the magnificent panorama of light with which the sun awakens the sleeping earth.

This day I should devote to a hasty glimpse of the world, past and present.

I should want to see the pageant of man's progress, the kaleidoscope of the ages. How can so much be compressed into one day? Through the museums, of course. Often I have visited the New York Museum of Natural History to touch with my hands many of the objects there exhibited, but I have longed to see with my eyes the condensed history of the earth and its inhabitants displayed there — animals and the races of men pictured in their native environment; gigantic carcasses of dinosaurs and mastodons which roamed the earth long before man appeared, with his tiny stature and powerful brain, to conquer the animal kingdom; realistic presentations of the processes of evolution in animals, in man, and in the implements which man has used to fashion for himself a secure home on this planet; and a thousand and one other aspects of natural history.

I wonder how many readers of this article have viewed this panorama of the face of living things as pictured in that inspiring museum. Many, of course, have not had the opportunity, but I am sure that many who *have* had the opportunity have not made use of it. There, indeed, is a place to use your eyes. You who see can spend many fruitful days there, but I, with my imaginary three days of sight, could only take a hasty glimpse, and pass on.

My next stop would be the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for just as the Museum of Natural History reveals the material aspects of the world, so does the Metropolitan show the myriad facets of the human spirit. Throughout the history of humanity the urge to artistic expression has been almost as powerful as the urge for food, shelter, and procreation. And here, in the vast chambers of the Metropolitan Museum, is unfolded before me the spirit of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as expressed in their art. I know well through my hands the sculptured gods and goddesses of the ancient Nile-land. I have felt copies of Parthenon friezes, and I have sensed the rhythmic beauty of charging Athenian warriors. Apollos and Venuses and the Winged Victory of Samothrace are friends of my finger tips. The gnarled, bearded features of Homer are dear to me, for he, too, knew blindness.

My hands have lingered upon the living marble of Roman sculpture as well as that of later generations. I have passed my hands over a plaster cast of Michelangelo's inspiring and heroic Moses; I have sensed the power of Rodin; I have been awed by the devoted spirit of Gothic wood carving. These arts which can be touched have meaning for me, but even they were meant to be seen rather than felt, and I can only guess at the beauty which remains hidden from me. I can admire the simple lines of a Greek vase, but its figured decorations are lost to me.

So on this, my second day of sight, I should try to probe into the soul of man through his art. The things I knew through touch I should now see. More splendid still, the whole magnificent world of painting would be opened to me, from the Italian Primitives, with their serene religious devotion, to the Moderns, with their feverish visions. I should look deep into the canvases of Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Rembrandt. I should want to feast my eyes upon the warm colors of Veronese, study the mysteries of El Greco, catch a new vision of Nature from Corot. Oh, there is so much rich meaning and beauty in the art of the ages for you who have eyes to see!

Upon my short visit to this temple of art I should not be able to review a fraction of that great world of art which is open to you. I should be able to get only a superficial impression. Artists tell

me that for a deep and true appreciation of art one must educate the eye. One must learn through experience to weigh the merits of line, of composition, of form and color. If I had eyes, how happily would I embark upon so fascinating a study! Yet I am told that, to many of you who have eyes to see, the world of art is a dark night, unexplored and unilluminated.

It would be with extreme reluctance that I should leave the Metropolitan Museum, which contains the key to beauty — a beauty so neglected. Seeing persons, however, do not need a Metropolitan to find this key to beauty. The same key lies waiting in smaller museums, and in books on the shelves of even small libraries. But naturally, in my limited time of imaginary sight, I should choose the place where the key unlocks the greatest treasures in the shortest time.

The evening of my second day of sight I should spend at a theatre or at the movies. Even now I often attend theatrical performances of all sorts, but the action of the play must be spelled into my hand by a companion. But how I should like to see with my own eyes the fascinating figure of Hamlet, or the gusty Falstaff amid colorful Elizabethan trappings! How I should like to follow each movement of the graceful Hamlet, each strut of the hearty Falstaff! And since I could see only one play, I should be confronted by a many-horned dilemma, for there are scores of plays I should want to see. You who have eyes can see any you like. How many of you, I wonder, when you gaze at a play, a movie, or any spectacle, realize and give thanks for the miracle of sight which enables you to enjoy its color, grace, and movement?

I cannot enjoy the beauty of rhythmic movement except in a sphere restricted to the touch of my hands. I can vision only dimly the grace of a Pavlowa, although I know something of the delight of rhythm, for often I can sense the beat of music as it vibrates through the floor. I can well imagine that cadenced motion must be one of the most pleasing sights in the world. I have been able to gather something of this by tracing with my fingers the lines in sculptured marble; if this static grace can be so lovely, how much more acute must be the thrill of seeing grace in motion.

One of my dearest memories is of the time when Joseph Jefferson allowed me to touch his face and hands as he went through some of the gestures and speeches of his beloved Rip Van Winkle. I was able to catch thus a meagre glimpse of the world of drama, and I shall never forget the delight of that moment. But, oh, how much I must miss, and how much pleasure you seeing ones can derive from watching and hearing the interplay of speech and movement in the unfolding of a dramatic performance! If I could see only one play, I should know how to picture in my mind the action of a hundred plays which I have read or had transferred to me through the medium of the manual alphabet.

So, through the evening of my second imaginary day of sight, the great figures of dramatic literature would crowd sleep from my eyes.

IV

The following morning, I should again greet the dawn, anxious to discover new delights, for I am sure that, for those who have eyes which really see, the dawn of each day must be a perpetually new revelation of beauty.

This, according to the terms of my imagined miracle, is to be my third and last day of sight. I shall have no time to waste in regrets or longings; there is

too much to see. The first day I devoted to my friends, animate and inanimate. The second revealed to me the history of man and Nature. To-day I shall spend in the workaday world of the present, amid the haunts of men going about the business of life. And where can one find so many activities and conditions of men as in New York? So the city becomes my destination.

I start from my home in the quiet little suburb of Forest Hills, Long Island. Here, surrounded by green lawns, trees, and flowers, are neat little houses, happy with the voices and movements of wives and children, havens of peaceful rest for men who toil in the city. I drive across the lacy structure of steel which spans the East River, and I get a new and startling vision of the power and ingenuity of the mind of man. Busy boats chug and scurry about the river — racy speed boats, stolid, snorting tugs. If I had long days of sight ahead, I should spend many of them watching the delightful activity upon the river.

I look ahead, and before me rise the fantastic towers of New York, a city that seems to have stepped from the pages of a fairy story. What an awe-inspiring sight, these glittering spires, these vast banks of stone and steel — structures such as the gods might build for themselves! This animated picture is a part of the lives of millions of people every day. How many, I wonder, give it so much as a second glance? Very few, I fear. Their eyes are blind to this magnificent sight because it is so familiar to them.

I hurry to the top of one of those gigantic structures, the Empire State Building, for there, a short time ago, I 'saw' the city below through the eyes of my secretary. I am anxious to compare my fancy with reality. I am sure I should not be disappointed in the panorama spread out before me, for to me it would be a vision of another world.

Now I begin my rounds of the city. First, I stand at a busy corner, merely looking at people, trying by sight of them to understand something of their lives. I see smiles, and I am happy. I see serious determination, and I am proud. I see suffering, and I am compassionate.

I stroll down Fifth Avenue. I throw my eyes out of focus, so that I see no particular object but only a seething kaleidoscope of color. I am certain that the colors of women's dresses moving in a throng must be a gorgeous spectacle of which I should never tire. But perhaps if I had sight I should be like most other women — too interested in styles and the cut of individual dresses to give much attention to the splendor of color in the mass. And I am convinced, too, that I should become an inveterate window shopper, for it must be a delight to the eye to view the myriad articles of beauty on display.

From Fifth Avenue I make a tour of the city — to Park Avenue, to the slums, to factories, to parks where children play. I take a stay-at-home trip abroad by visiting the foreign quarters. Always my eyes are open wide to all the sights of both happiness and misery so that I may probe deep and add to my understanding of how people work and live. My heart is full of the images of people and things. My eye passes lightly over no single trifle; it strives to touch and hold closely each thing its gaze rests upon. Some sights are pleasant, filling the heart with happiness; but some are miserably pathetic. To these latter I do not shut my eyes, for they, too, are part of life. To close the eye on them is to close the heart and mind.

My third day of sight is drawing to an end. Perhaps there are many serious pursuits to which I should devote the few remaining hours, but I am afraid

that on the evening of that last day I should again run away to the theatre, to a hilariously funny play, so that I might appreciate the overtones of comedy in the human spirit.

At midnight my temporary respite from blindness would cease, and permanent night would close in on me again. Naturally in those three short days I should not have seen all I wanted to see. Only when darkness had again descended upon me should I realize how much I had left unseen. But my mind would be so crowded with glorious memories that I should have little time for regrets. Thereafter the touch of every object would bring a glowing memory of how that object looked.

Perhaps this short outline of how I should spend three days of sight does not agree with the programme you would set for yourself if you knew that you were about to be stricken blind. I am, however, sure that if you actually faced that fate your eyes would open to things you had never seen before, storing up memories for the long night ahead. You would use your eyes as never before. Everything you saw would become dear to you. Your eyes would touch and embrace every object that came within your range of vision. Then, at last, you would really see, and a new world of beauty would open itself before you.

I who am blind can give one hint to those who see — one admonition to those who would make full use of the gift of sight: Use your eyes as if to-morrow you would be stricken blind. And the same method can be applied to the other senses. Hear the music of voices, the song of a bird, the mighty strains of an orchestra, as if you would be stricken deaf to-morrow. Touch each object you want to touch as if to-morrow your tactile sense would fail. Smell the perfume of flowers, taste with relish each morsel, as if to-morrow you could never smell and taste again. Make the most of every sense; glory in all the facets of pleasure and beauty which the world reveals to you through the several means of contact which Nature provides. But of all the senses, I am sure that sight must be the most delightful.

A MANCHURIAN RACKETEER

BY W. PETRO-PAVLOVSKY

I

THE Orient, like America, has had its racketeers, and the greatest of these was Yu Ta Chuan, Manchurian bandit. Meeting him casually, one would probably have taken him for a retired official. He was tall and aristocratic-looking, with a thin face and piercing dark eyes. His manner was always grave and courteous, and, like all Chinese, he had a great respect for learning and in fact was himself something of a scholar. His outward appearance gave no indication of his ruthlessness, of his lust for power, of his determination to succeed in his chosen career.

It was from him that I learned the rules and regulations of the bandit game in Manchuria. He became my friend when an American engineering firm in North China sent me to take charge of the building of a canal between the Liao-ho and the Shwang Tai Tze rivers. I arrived in Hai Hsien on March 19, 1927.

I had brought with me a considerable sum of money to pay for the sleepers of the light railway, but unfortunately the conditions of the road made it impossible for me to make payments on the day of my arrival. That night I was warned of the possibility of a bandit attack, so I decided to hide this money before going to bed, and I distributed it as follows: 1700 fêng-piao — the local Manchurian currency — under my pillow; five hundred dollars underneath the mat on the floor; several hundred dollars in a woolen shirt, which I threw in a heap of clothes by the bed; one thousand dollars under two tins of kerosene, which were in a box in the adjoining room.

I went to bed at ten, and was fast asleep by ten-thirty; then I was awakened by heavy blows on the window frame of my room and on the door of the next room. Instinctively, I grabbed my pistol from under my pillow and fired two shots into the window. Since the window was of paper, I could not see what was going on outside; but in reply to my shots five or six shots were fired into my room, and at the same time the window was broken in with rifle butts. I replied again with my revolver; but only four cartridges out of the remaining five fired, the fifth having stuck in the barrel. Several more shots came from outside, and, since it was apparent that I could not reply in kind, I went into the next room and armed myself with a heavy stick. Suddenly the door burst open and a man rushed in. I hit him once before I realized that he was Ta Feng Yang, one of my own men. He told me that there were thirty well-armed men outside, and begged me to give them my gun and my money. He said if I refused they would set the house on fire. To avoid that, I handed him my revolver and about half of the fêng-piao notes, which I told him to give the bandits.

He threw the gun into the courtyard,

and immediately six men rushed into the room. One of them was armed with a Chinese military rifle and two revolvers, one with a Mauser pistol, two with rifles, and two with big revolvers with revolving drums. Through the open door I saw two more armed men with rifles leveled on the servants' and staff quarters.

On entering the room, the bandits fired a few shots in the ground, caught me by the arms and bound my hands behind my back, and demanded money. I gave them the fêng-piao and told them that was all the money I had, as I had come to survey and not to make payments. Thereupon they insulted my forefathers in the best Chinese style, and started beating me on the arms and legs.

Then a thorough search of the room took place. The contents of my suitcase were emptied into my blanket; drawers were pulled out from the table, and whatever was inside was thrown on the ground; mats were lifted from the floor; walls were probed. But the money that was found did not satisfy my callers.

They turned on me again and renewed their beatings; but when I refused to answer their questions as to where the rest of the money was hidden, they decided on a more stringent method of making me talk. Some of them had gone into the next room and had found the kerosene. This they had brought back and poured lavishly over a towel. The towel they wound around my neck — and intimated that they would set fire to it if I did not answer their questions. Evidently they were well posted as to the sum of money I had brought with me!

A shout from the next room stopped them. One of the bandits had discovered the bank notes I had hidden in the box under the kerosene tins. They counted them carefully and departed at twelve-thirty, leaving me tied up.

During the raid the Chinese staff was held under the point of a gun, but none of them were robbed. I suppose their things were not good enough, because I found later that the bandits had taken all my linen handkerchiefs and had left me only the cotton ones.

The next day eleven soldiers came from the 'Hsien' town to make an investigation. Their officer carefully explained to me that they could not take any responsibility for the robbery, because I had not notified the magistrate of my arrival with large sums of money. They spent the rest of their visit eating all the flour that was to be found on the premises, and carefully departed before dark.

II

A few days later, I was working in the field surveying the line when a Chinese coolie brought me a letter and asked for one of my cards as a receipt. After I had given it to him, I had the letter read to me by my Chinese secretary. Here is a translation of it: —

> We, Yu Ta Chuan, Pei Feng, and Pei Hei, have learned with great concern of the savage attack made on you by some 'irresponsible people.' The authorities accuse us of having done it, but we can assure you that we never employ such brutal means as those of beating our prisoners or of threatening them with fire. Because you are a brave man, we are anxious to establish good relations with you. So, in order to whiten our faces, we will try to find the culprits, punish them severely, and restore your stolen property.

I learned that the men who sent this letter were the three well-known bandit leaders of the district, and that actually they controlled the country. By 'irresponsible people' they meant amateur bandits who engage in robberies

only when they cannot find work to do in the fields.

Apparently the bandit leaders were very interested in me, for after a lapse of several days I received — again in the field — another letter and a package. The package, sent with their compliments, contained my revolver with the bullet still stuck in the barrel. The letter went on to say this was proof that my new friends had caught some of the men who robbed me; that two of them had been severely beaten; that unfortunately my gold watch, my money, and my clothes had not been recovered, as they had been 'sent far away.' All this was very nice, but the last paragraph of the letter was disquieting. It contained an invitation for me to call, unattended, on the bandit leaders, at a near-by village, the following afternoon at four o'clock.

Such an invitation could only mean they wanted something from me. But what? I finally decided that they were going to ask me to pay a large sum of 'insurance money.' (It is not unusual in Manchuria for big companies to give the local bandits a certain amount every month, in return for which they are guaranteed protection from all bandits operating in the region.) I was afraid they might expect to get as much as $200,000 (Mexican) a year from us; and I had no intention of giving it to them.

There was nothing for me to do, however, but go to see them; and this I did the next afternoon, reaching the outskirts of the village at the appointed time. I was met there by two sentries, each carrying a rifle, two Mauser pistols, and a lot of cartridges. I felt a little uneasy at first, but they were very polite, and told me the 'chief' had sent them to escort me to headquarters. He was staying in a large farmhouse, the courtyard of which was filled with bandits, all well armed. I estimated that there must have been at least eighty of them. My arrival caused much comment and curiosity, but everyone was extremely respectful. This was lucky, for it saved me the bother of worrying about what I should do to uphold my dignity in case of trouble.

After a short wait, I was ushered into the house. Sitting on the *k'ang* was a tall, aristocratic-looking Chinese. He got up and introduced himself as Mr. Yu Ta Chuan, and asked me those questions which are a prelude to any conversation between strangers in China — my honorable name, my honorable country, the number of celestial signs (my age), and so forth.

When a servant — although he was armed with two Mauser pistols and a rifle — brought some pears and Lung Tsin tea, — it costs more than a dollar an ounce, — I began to feel more comfortable, and soon the bandit chief put me completely at my ease by asking me — a sure sign of friendship — to smoke a pipe with him. This I declined to do, saying that I had never learned how to smoke. He remarked that this was a pity, since opium was the only thing which helped one get rid of the worries of daily life, and that it was also good as a 'pick-me-up' after severe physical exhaustion.

Our conversation lingered on general subjects, such as the weather to be expected within the next month, the migration of geese, which had started too early, the prospects of the bean crop, the political situation in China, and the deplorable lack of learning among the new class of officials, until I began to despair of learning why I had been sent for. To ask outright was, of course, impossible. Hiding my impatience, I thanked him for the honor of an invitation to his headquarters, told him that his reputation was great throughout the country, and that the

peasants, who held him in high respect, called him 'Protector of the Poor.' He returned these compliments by telling me I was a very brave man, and that he had never before heard of anyone who, being attacked by a large group of armed bandits, had dared to shoot at them.

III

By this time more than twenty minutes had elapsed since my arrival, and, according to the Chinese code of manners, we could now get down to business.

'I hear,' said the bandit chief, 'that your company is going to build a canal from the Shwang Tai Tze to the Liao.'

Wondering what this had to do with bandits, I told him it was true.

'It is a very commendable work,' he said. 'It will help navigation a great deal, and will save four days' run through the loops of the Liao.'

'I hope so,' I said, still wondering.

'I am personally interested in the success of the scheme,' the chief went on, 'as I own some boats on the river. Besides that, I have a large farm on the river bank, and I hope it will greatly increase in value.'

So this was the reason for his interest in me.

'I'm glad to hear that,' I said, 'and I hope you become prosperous.'

But what he had said was only an introduction to what he wanted to say. We smoked our cigarettes a minute in silence. Then the chief went on.

'You must need a large number of men to do the work.'

'I am importing five thousand coolies from South Chih-li Province,' I told him. 'I expect them to arrive in three weeks.'

'Five thousand men! That means an expenditure of at least three thousand silver dollars a day.'

'A little less; because part of the payment for labor is transferred directly from our office in Tientsin to the men's families. Locally I'll only have to buy corn and other foodstuffs.'

The bandit chief looked at me keenly.

'You know, don't you,' he asked me, 'that grain prices are always quoted here in local currency? If you pay in silver, you'll lose on the exchange.'

'I know that, and I intend to buy local currency in Niuchwang — strictly according to needs, for the exchange is not very stable.'

'Stable!' he grunted angrily. 'I should say it's not stable. You'd better be careful, or your company will lose money. Last year the government held up the exchange artificially at seven to one, before the bean crop was harvested. Then the government bought all the crop with newly issued fêng-piao. After the crop was purchased, the exchange fell to forty fêng-piao to one silver dollar. I was badly hit. From now on, all my savings will be in silver. As a matter of fact, I have lost faith in the government since our chief — Marshal Chang Tso Lin — went to Peking, where he spends our Manchurian money on Chinese politics.'

'I look for a sudden fall in local currency if things go wrong with the Marshal in Peking,' I said.

'I hope they won't — but we've gotten off the question. Tell me, how are you going to manage the exchange and transport of currency from town — Niuchwang? The distance, you know, is long; and the roads are not safe. Our people, I am sorry to say, are not too honest.'

'The Chinese have the reputation of being the most trustworthy people —'

'You are entirely too polite. We have many men who cannot resist temptation. As the exchange varies daily on the market, you will not be

able to check at what price your currency was bought. And there is the possibility of another difficulty. Suppose your messenger steals the money, but tells you he has been attacked by bandits: you will have no way of verifying his statement.'

At last I had an inkling of where this conversation was leading us. I breathed a sigh of relief inwardly. Outwardly I remained as passive as I could be.

'Yes, the problem is a difficult one. Thank you for enlightening me on the subject. I see I shall have to attend to the exchange business myself.'

'That is where I dare to say you are wrong. You might, perhaps, make one, or even two, trips into town successfully. Sooner or later, however, it will be known that you go for money. The next time you do, some irresponsible person will attack you, and you will lose not only your money but your life. I feel a great deal of sympathy toward you, so I want to make you a proposal that will be of benefit to us both.' He looked at me keenly, but as I made no answer he went on. 'You see, *our* problem is just the opposite of yours. We have the trouble of sending our money into Niuchwang, where we keep an account in the Bank of China. By the way, does your company keep its account at the Bank of China or at the Bank of Communications?'

'At the Bank of China.'

'What a lucky coincidence! If we make any transactions, it will be as easy for the bank as for us.'

'I am very sorry,' I murmured, 'but I don't understand exactly what you mean.'

He brushed this lightly aside.

'You don't have to stand on ceremony with me. I'll come straight to the point. I and my associates have to send our earnings, which are usually in local currency, to the bank at Niuchwang. Sometimes there are difficulties, for the soldiers search everyone who enters the town and a large amount of fêng-piao can't easily be concealed. Therefore, there is always the danger that our money will be confiscated from our agents — whom, as a matter of fact, I don't trust too much. You, on the other hand, have to import money here. My proposal is this: sell us your checks on Niuchwang. We'll always be glad to buy them.'

There was no doubt about it: my bandit was a born business man!

'I realize your scheme is helpful to me,' I said, 'but how can we settle the exchange?'

'That's simple. At the market place in the next village there's a telephone. You can call up Niuchwang and ask the rate of exchange. We can do the same. If there is any disagreement we can always settle it in a friendly way.'

Inwardly I accepted his offer at once, but there was no use hurrying matters. I hesitated a moment, therefore, before answering, but finally said: 'Very well, I accept your offer. And now, since it is getting dark, I must go home and attend to my business.'

He got up to wish me good-bye.

'From now on,' he said, 'you have nothing to fear here. We are friends. I guarantee that not a hair on your head will be harmed. I shall give orders, also, for the protection of your employees. But I cannot detain you longer. I wish you a peaceful road.'

So with my financial affairs arranged, and my own safety and that of my men guaranteed, I returned home.

IV

My headquarters were at a mud-baked farmhouse, Yu Chia Lo (Mukden Province, Pan Shan District, one hundred and fifty miles northwest of Niuchwang), in which there were

three courtyards. One of these was occupied by my office, myself, and twenty soldiers, who were necessary to keep order among the large number of workmen I employed. The second was used for grain stores. I had several thousand men to feed, and all the corn used had to be milled by primitive methods. The third court I turned over to my foreman, mechanics, and other employees.

As my relation with the bandit chief grew more friendly, he dropped in to see me almost daily. He asked me if I could leave a room in the third courtyard for his men, in case any of them were forced to stop overnight in that particular region. I agreed to do so; and I soon found that my farm was strategically placed from a bandit point of view, because it was at a spot where three districts met. It was not unusual for me to have between fifty and a hundred bandits staying in my house overnight, and I gave orders that each of them was to receive a workman's ration of food. For the chiefs I always kept on hand a supply of tea, fruit, and opium.

Before long, Yu Ta Chuan became my 'sworn brother.' The ceremony was very simple. He handed me a list of his relatives with an inscription after each name. This inscription was always the same, and ran in this manner: 'My mother is your mother, my father is your father,' and so forth.

From the first time I had heard about him, I knew that my 'sworn brother' was a man of importance in bandit circles; and I was not surprised, therefore, to learn that he was Chief of Staff of the bandits for the whole province. As such, his work was primarily that of an executive, and only the most important prisoners were under his immediate supervision. I once saw in my third courtyard the son of the governor of Ninguta — a place near the Chinese Eastern Railway, which was about four hundred miles to the north. I was curious to know why anyone from so far away should be there, and I was afterward told that valuable prisoners — the bandits collected a ransom of $50,000 for this particular young man — were kept continually moving about the country until the bandits were bought off.

V

Although Yu Ta Chuan was extremely clever, his authority among the bandits rested not upon his brains, but upon an incident of which the whole countryside knew, and for which all the people, peasants as well as bandits, respected him. Some years ago, when he was only a bandit apprentice, he was caught by the authorities. At the time of his capture he was unarmed, so that there was no direct evidence against him; but it was generally known that he was connected with the bandits. The magistrate before whom he was brought decided to make him talk. With this end in view, he ordered a large hook to be jammed below the bandit's ribs, and had him hung from a tree. When Yu Ta Chuan lost consciousness, he was cut down and restored to life; and, although this performance was repeated three times, he never uttered a word which could incriminate his associates.

But I, his 'sworn brother,' learned more from him than the magistrate had done. It was he himself who told me how the bandits in Manchuria were organized, and I learned to my surprise that bandits were always assigned districts of operation by the central organization. If, as it sometimes happened, they were driven away from their area by soldiers, or if their business became poor, they had to apply to the Chief of Staff of the

Province for a new territory to work in.

The office of the Chief of Staff of the bandits in Manchuria was well organized. It was divided into three main subdivisions. These were the Intelligence Department, the Treasury Department, and the Secretarial Department.

Of these, the Intelligence Department was the most efficient. Its agents were numerous and included bank clerks, — who supplied information about bank accounts, checks drawn, and so forth, — officers in the army, — who supplied information about troop movements, — employees of the Chambers of Commerce, — who supplied information about the financial standing of proposed victims, — personal servants, inn owners, cart drivers, and skippers of junks. These last were the eyes and ears of the Chief of Staff.

The information obtained from these various sources was carried verbally or sent by code to headquarters. Such a letter might read: 'My cousin Mr. —— is going to his home to make annual offerings to his ancestors. His business was particularly good this year, and his sales amounted to $200,000, although cash is rather scarce.' To the Intelligence Department such a letter would mean that a certain rich merchant could afford to pay the bandits $20,000, or 10 per cent of his yearly sales.

The Treasury Department was next in importance. It kept careful track of all the money that came into the bandits' hands; it handled their investments; and once a year it divided the annual profits among them. Under its jurisdiction were the 'Insurance Offices.' One such office was in a well-known grain shop in the city of Niuchwang.

Anyone contemplating a trip could go there and say: 'Within the next two months I am going to such and such a place on business. I intend to take with me $25,000 in silver. I should like to inquire if that district, where I understand you have some connections, is safe?'

The answer would be brief and to the point: 'Two and one-half per cent.'

As soon as the two and a half per cent was paid, the shop would issue a ticket, which was a letter of introduction, with a receipt attached. If, on his journey, the traveler met any bandit, he had only to show this letter and he would be allowed to pass unmolested.

The Secretarial Department was in charge of all correspondence on business matters, and was also entrusted with the writing of warning letters to prospective victims.

The bandits in Manchuria carried on their activities in two ways. The first method, that of kidnaping and holding for ransom, was used chiefly in the districts where the bandits were less numerous than the soldiers. No attack was ever undertaken without careful planning; and when an ambuscade was finally arranged, it was made in a part of the country where the bandits knew government troops would not be on hand. This method required meticulous preparation, correct timing, and skillful execution.

The second method which the bandits used for the extortion of money was far simpler, and was always employed in those districts which they controlled. They sent their victims a letter by messenger, who always brought them back a receipt. The letter stated that the local 'association for maintaining peace,' or some association of a similar title, wanted a grant or subsidy. A reply was requested within a definite time. There-

upon a meeting was usually arranged between the bandits and their victims. The matter was discussed at length, and if the victim was convinced that the request came from 'serious people' and not from any 'irresponsible organization' he would bargain to the best of his ability, and generally settle for about half the amount demanded. This sum was fixed in such a way that the victim could raise the money without serious difficulty and could usually recover his losses within a year.

If, however, the victim refused to come to terms, his house was attacked. Oddly enough, everyone in the countryside except the man most concerned knew at what hour such an attack would take place. For example, I was warned not to pass through a certain village one night, as they were 'going to rob old Mr. Sung.'

When such an attack was made, the victim was kidnaped, and the ransom demanded from the family was usually twice the amount the bandits had asked in the beginning. It was, however, never more than all the man's cash and other easily liquidated assets. If the family did not come through, the bandits refused to take any responsibility for the consequences. They murdered the man in cold blood, and looted and burned his house as a punishment to the family.

The bandits never attacked native farmers, and only 'taxed' them after the opium harvest. As soon as the magistrate's commission had inspected the poppy fields and collected the tax, the bandits would come and collect exactly the same amount. The farmers did not consider this as robbery, but as a 'tax of protection' against loose groups of 'irresponsible people,' who might otherwise have come to loot them of everything they possessed. On the whole, the bandits were popular with the farmers, perhaps because they were always careful to pay for whatever they took while staying in a farmhouse. The soldiers, on the other hand, never payed for anything, and the peasants disliked them thoroughly. This was one of the reasons why troops, even if they were sincere in their desire to catch the bandits, had difficulty in doing so. The farmers, shielding 'their protectors,' always directed the soldiers to areas uninhabited by bandits.

VI

My own relations with the bandits were extremely pleasant, and our financial dealings were always easily and quickly attended to. Never once was there any argument or disagreement as to the rate of exchange I was to receive for my checks; never once was there any suggestion of 'insurance money' from my company, or of personal gifts from myself. The bandits trusted me and I trusted them.

One day, Yu Ta Chuan asked me if I could arrange to order him some 8x Zeiss field glasses from Tientsin. I had a special messenger bring them, and they were in my house three days later. I decided to send them to Yu Ta Chuan as a present. I did so, and sent a card with 'compliments and best wishes' written on it in Chinese.

He came that evening to thank me for them.

'Here is a small gift for you,' he said, handing me a beautiful jade ornament, a pendant; 'but it is not at all in proportion to the service you rendered me. I have been thinking—'

'You overstate the importance of my present,' I replied. 'As a matter of fact, I don't know why you wanted the glasses, for I know your eyesight is extraordinary. Don't the farmers call you "wild cat" because you see

as well at night as in the daytime?'

He completely disregarded the last part of my remark.

'I'm not going to use the glasses for myself, but they are important for a problem which I have on hand. I should like, therefore, to reciprocate your kindness in getting them for me by rendering you some equally valuable service.'

'There is really nothing you can do for me.'

He thought for a moment, and then a look of satisfaction spread over his face.

'The representative from your bank comes here from time to time to check your accounts, does n't he? In a business like yours I should think you might sometimes forget to mark down an expenditure, and then to make matters right you would have to use your own money. If you want, we could easily hold the man for a time until he agreed to give you a certificate.'

With difficulty I restrained the laughter that rose to my lips, and answered solemnly, 'That's most kind of you, but I have no difficulties with the bank. My accounts are in order, and the man only comes here to help me.'

He looked disappointed. 'You foreigners, of course, have different ways of doing things.' Then his face brightened. 'But perhaps there is someone else whose temporary absence would not be a great loss to you.'

'Well,' I said jokingly, 'the only person who annoys me here is the Japanese engineer, who, as you know, is the Chinese Government Inspector of my contract.'

'Oh, why did n't I think of that before! But this is a serious matter, and I am ashamed to say — '

Interested to know why the Japanese inspector should be held in such high esteem by the bandit, I decided to carry the matter still further until my curiosity was satisfied.

'But why is it so difficult? He's not armed, and he never has a guard. Besides that, you know the governor hates him.'

'If you insist, I'll tell you the truth. It's dangerous for us to touch a Japanese. First of all, they have troops in Niuchwang who would certainly attack us. Secondly, if our relations with them were spoiled, where should we buy our pistols and cartridges? We should be reduced to starvation.'

It was not long after this conversation that the canal was finished, and I made preparations to go back to Peking.

The day of my departure, Yu Ta Chuan gave a huge dinner in my honor. The food, which included all the rarest Chinese delicacies, such as bird's-nest soup, had been ordered in Niuchwang, and the cooks came from there to prepare the feast. The party was a decided success. But for me the high point was reached when the bandit chief made a speech and solemnly presented me with a farewell gift — the gold watch which had been taken from me two years before.

MOTHER TO SON

Before all other things, my son,
Be sure you learn a craft:
It shall be daily bread to you
And a tower for every shaft,
When rich men die of their desires
And the rabblement is daft.

The music moving through your hands,
As cool as water flowing,
Shall wash all fevers from your blood
And keep the heart's mill going,
Singing its twofold mystery —
Self-mastered, self-bestowing.

Young Jesus in his mother's house
Rejoiced as carpenter;
Thought shone from every lovely grain
Of woods he tooled for her.
She loved them more than Magian gold
And memories of myrrh.

His friends were shepherds, fishermen,
Users of hands and eyes,
Whose idlest member was the tongue,
Whose books were earth and skies —
Not clever men who spoke and wrote
For plaudits, juggler-wise.

The woodsmen likewise were his friends:
One dwelt on Olivet
Who could pick out a cedar's sound
Although its roots were set
Afar, in a roaring sea of pine,
And the night were black as jet.

This woodsman's hands had gentleness
For all shy furry things;
He got as close as mortal may
To the fluttering soul in wings,
And the secret joy of mountain flowers
And the speech of lonely springs.

It was the mob without a craft,
Tapster and tout and hind,
Worked up by clever men who wrote,
And mouths whose trade was wind,
And the rich with naught to do but rake
For evil in their mind,

Who felled that woodsman's favorite tree
When fledged with earliest leaves,
And nailed thereon his favorite friend
Like a cullion king of thieves:
The strong and comely man of men
Like a dead crow swung from eaves.

Beauty betrayed by empty minds
To most ignoble end;
The sorrows of the man who grew
A gallows for his friend;
Great poets quoted with a twist
When the battles rave and rend —

All this, too true, has been before,
And will again be done
Till men seek out a nobler mould
For the vital fire to run;
But come what may, the fault's not yours —
You choose a craft, my son.

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

THE ROYAL ROAD TO BANKRUPTCY

BY ONE WHO TOOK THE RIDE

I

THE typewriter which records these lines is the last relic of my brilliant business career. I bought it a week ago for $15 — from the receivers of a $400,000,000 holding company which had once given me an exalted title and a handsome salary.

At the present moment, the company is in bankruptcy. Its assets have disappeared. Its executives are scattered with the winds. And I sit here, at my $15 typewriter, trying to recall the old days, and the old people. Where are they all now — the Presidents and Assistants to the Presidents, the Vice Presidents and Assistants to the Vice Presidents, the Comptrollers, Publicity Managers, and Public Relations Directors? They were super-executives, 'men of wide experience and acknowledged ability.' The bond circulars said so.

But where are they now? Like Prospero's players — melted into thin air. In their place sit the receivers in bankruptcy, a handful of stenographers, and a row of elegant, empty walnut desks.

It was from the academic groves that I first plunged into Big Business. This was in the fabulous summer of 1929. Big Business was in the air. In those days Giants of Industry stalked the earth, and power and plenty followed in their train.

So I made the plunge. In August 1929, I left my cramped office in an ancient college building. It was a relic of academic unworldliness, that little office. Its battered desk was of painful golden oak. My filing cabinet was a wooden grocery box, with the trademark still apparent in black and red upon the end. On the wall was a jumble of exposed pipes and wires — symbols of the machine civilization which had arisen since the ancient bricks had first been laid.

That was in August. I departed as a humble college worker to seek my fortune in the City of Big Business.

II

Two months later found me installed behind one of the elegant walnut desks in a skyscraper office on Wall Street. On top of the desk was a telephone box with a dozen keys. Beneath it was a large and shiny brass spittoon. I had become a super-executive.

Those 1929 days were Happy Days for everyone. But, even in terms of 1929, I was considered lucky. My college classmates regarded me with a mixture of awe and envy. They had come to think of me as a shabby teacher fellow in a shabby office. Suddenly they found me sitting masterfully at a walnut desk in the office of a holding company whose consolidated balance sheet showed total assets of $400,000,000. When they telephoned, their calls were relayed through a pair of secretaries. When they called, a suave

receptionist met them in the spacious hall and deposited them in cushioned chairs until I was free to see them.

For three years I sat at that desk. I dictated letters. I sent telegrams. I wrote memoranda. I sat in on conferences in a paneled Board Room. I attended luncheons in private dining rooms. By train and airplane, I whisked about the country at lightning speed.

What was it all about? What was the purpose of the meetings and the memoranda? For the life of me, I cannot remember. It is like trying to recall the shadow of a dream.

In an effort to reconstruct the picture, I have beside me a pile of expense accounts from those palmy days. Those are the real and intimate entries in the Diary of Big Business. In them I observe these random items: —

January 2. Trip to Jamesville to discuss radio advertising.....	$250.00
February 10. Advance, trip to Chicago, organization meeting National Private Management League.....	375.00
February 15. Conference and entertainment, Jones, Smith, and Brown.....	45.00
March 6. Incidental expense, Havana Convention.....	95.00
March 15. Telephone and telegraph expense, Danburg situation.....	14.75
March 24. Jamesville Convention, incidental expense.....	143.00
March 30. Trip to Harrisville. Municipal situation.....	91.00

Behind these scurryings to and fro there was, it must be said, a certain purpose, though it is hard to recognize, now that the company lies smouldering in its ashes. I was a Public Relations Director for a holding company which can be called Amalgamated International Corporation. It stood at the peak of a mountain of intermediate holding companies. Down in the foothills were the operating subsidiaries, a wide range of companies performing various sorts of utility service. To our stockholders, we announced in bold sweep that 'the subsidiary companies in your Company's system provide electric, gas, water, ice and/or steam heat service to a total of 1900 communities in 23 states.'

III

This was our empire, and we regarded it as such. We executives in the New York office spoke casually of the subsidiaries as 'the properties.' And from our eminence we looked down upon them like satraps in the days of Darius the Great. A trip to the properties was like a triumphal procession. It was on that subject that I received my first words of advice as I stood at the threshold of Big Business. My predecessor in office was showing me the routine of the new work. In his hand he held a request for information from one of the properties. 'Take a telegram, Miss Pendleton,' he shouted, turning to one of the secretaries; 'a straight telegram, please.'

'Wouldn't a letter do just as well?' I ventured, mindful of our old college economies.

'Not on your life,' he replied. 'Let 'em have telegrams. The boys on the properties love it. It makes them feel important. Besides,' he added, as an afterthought, 'we send 'em collect. The properties charge it to operating expense.'

As soon as a long-winded telegram had been dictated and dispatched, he embarked on a general discussion of the subject.

'One thing I want you to get straight before you start in. Don't be afraid to spend money. That's what expense accounts are for. Remember, you're in the New York office. You're a big executive, and when you go out on the

properties you're expected to spend money. You've got to keep up the prestige of the New York office. Ride in the best trains; take a compartment. Stay at the best hotels; get yourself a good suite of rooms. Taxis and telegrams are all to the good, too, and don't be afraid to buy the boys a drink once in a while.'

'But is all that really necessary?' I queried.

He looked at me with an air akin to pity. 'Sure it is. This is a big company. You're a big executive. We've got to hold up our end in the industry. As for the cash outlay, it's a drop in the bucket. Amalgamated International has a gross of $80,000,000 a year. What's a few dollars more or less?'

My misgivings were subdued a little. But now, in retrospect, I wonder if the dollars which were spent for those drinks, and a thousand more, — not to mention the taxis, trips, and telegrams, — might not have been used more profitably to meet the interest on Amalgamated International 5 per cent Secured Gold Debentures, defaulted just a few months ago.

IV

It is easy now to indulge in sour morality. Three years ago it was a different story. Then it seemed that there could be no limit and no end. Our industry was 'depression-proof.' All the financial journals said so, and we believed it. 'It always gets dark at night,' we caroled. 'People must have light at night!' And with that as a slogan we went forth to sell more stock and build more power plants.

In these latter days, since the downfall, I know that there will be much talk of corruption and dishonesty. But I can testify that our trouble was not that. Rather, we were undone by our own extravagant folly, and our delusions of grandeur. The gods were waiting to destroy us, and first they infected us with a peculiar and virulent sort of madness.

Already, as I try to recall those times, I cannot quite shake off the feeling that they were pages torn from the *Arabian Nights*. But they were not. The tinseled scenes through which I moved were real. The madcap events actually happened — not once, but every day. And at the moment nobody thought them in the least extraordinary. For that was the New Era. In it we felt ourselves the gods and the demigods. The old laws of economics were for mortals, but not for us. With us, anything was possible. The sky was the limit.

Looking back now, I see how naïve were our godlike airs. Most of us were really simple folk, of humble origin. Going the circuit of our walnut desks, one would hardly have found a single executive who had not worked his way up from the ranks. They had begun in small towns as owners or operators of little companies. The companies had been bought up by Amalgamated International, and the owners annexed as super-executives. To maintain the power and glory of their new estate, they felt that it was their duty to carry on like Oriental princes.

At no time was the spectacle more imposing than at the annual conventions. Ah, those conventions! They were a Papal Mass, a Court Ball, and a Bacchanalian Revel rolled into one. Each year they were scheduled for some expensive resort. From the four corners of the country, special trains rolled in, laden with super-executives, super-executives' wives, and innumerable wardrobe trunks. The first day I stood behind a grove of potted palms in a hotel lobby and watched them register. A friend beside me pointed out the celebrities. Board

Chairmen and Presidents without limit filed past, and the names of their companies read like the pages of *Poor's Manual.*

On the first day, the cards went out — for luncheons, dinners, and cocktail parties. London in season was as nothing compared to our convention. Each super-executive and wife had tried to get a suite of rooms more elegant than any their rivals had, to make their entertaining just a bit more splendid. In imagination I could see half a hundred wives plotting and planning weeks in advance with their super-executive husbands. 'We must not mind the expense, John, dear. We owe it to the company to make a better appearance than those Ackersons from Tulsa when *he* was chairman of your committee last year.' To such a proposition there could be only one answer. Advance reservations were wired to the hotel. New gowns were ordered for the wardrobe trunk. Conferences were held with head waiters and *maîtres d'hôtel.* And on the first day of the convention the cards went out.

Small wonder, then, that my head reeled with room numbers as I staggered around to pay court to the kings and queens of our industry. And, for that matter, small wonder that I staggered. When half a hundred Joneses set out to keep up with each other, the result is bound to be a Roman Holiday.

V

Conventions were the high point, but their spirit continued throughout the year. In New York, meetings of executives, from our own companies or corresponding groups, were held against a background of paneled walls. And trips to the properties were like triumphs. A visit of an executive from the New York office was always the signal for a turnout. As the limited train drew in, the General Manager's car and chauffeur were waiting at the station. The de luxe suite was in readiness at the best hotel. That evening a meeting was scheduled in the grand ballroom, where the employees could assemble and pay court. After the meeting there would be dancing, with the company orchestra in full blast. Cracked ice was to be had upstairs.

This was the normal programme — fantastic but true. Beside me, as I write, is a thick pile of expense accounts to document each item of our carryings-on.

Amalgamated International Corporation had more than 10,000 employees. They were the rank and file — linemen, meter readers, cashiers, and clerks; motormen, conductors, trackmen, and bill collectors. To keep the revenues flowing up the line, they worked hard, for long hours and meagre pay. Slaves they were to Olympus, but willing slaves. From a distance they marveled at our splendor, and gloried in it. Down in their hearts was the feeling that some day they might draw a winning ticket, and ride in club cars and attend conventions. Meanwhile we satisfied their craving for pomp and glamour to relieve the daily grind. To them we were the equivalent of King George, Queen Mary, and the House of Peers. Our subjects were well content to stand on the curbstones and cheer.

There is no underestimating the strength of this emotion. When the President of Amalgamated International set out for a convention, our house organ carried a picture of him posing on the observation platform of the 'Convention Special.' Ten thousand employees from Maine to Michigan gazed at it and gloated. When a New York executive came to a division office, employees for miles around perked up with a new interest in life.

A friendly smile or a word of recognition to a cashier or a company clerk would be an event remembered and gloried in for months.

It was the old principle of Stars and Garters. Employees would work their hearts out for some simple little sign of recognition from on high. Sales drives and promotional campaigns were constantly in progress. We found that cash prizes and commissions produced only nominal results. But let the word go out that the winning employee would go to a convention 'with the executives,' or be given a trip to New York for a handshake with the President, and the employees would go sleepless for weeks to make unfortunate customers 'Invest with Safety' in the company's preferred stock, or 'Put a New Lamp in Every Socket,' or buy one of our 'New Automatic, Electric, Self-Singeing Toasters.'

It was an age-old principle put to new purpose. We were glorified, beatified, canonized, and deified — and the employees bent the knee and made willing offerings before our shrines.

All this may have been good for the employees. But certainly it was very bad for us. It was a fairy-tale world, and it was bound to end. Sooner or later the clock would strike twelve, and leave us sitting among cold ashes on the hearth.

Sooner, rather than later, it did. Down in the valleys, business began to slow up. Factories curtailed production. Families of unemployed began to double up. Consumption of gas and electricity dropped. Operating revenues fell off only by 5 or 10 per cent, but when that change had been relayed up the line through intermediate holding companies A, B, C, and D, it meant that Amalgamated International Corporation's earnings had been cut in half. Margins behind dividends and bond interest dropped to alarming levels. The creditors started to close in, and, almost before we realized what was happening, it was over.

VI

For the first time in three years, the super-executives did some intensive thinking. Previously there had never been any time for that. Now expense accounts were things of the past, and there was plenty of leisure in which to ponder. During the weeks that the company was wavering between solvency, receivership, and bankruptcy, they wandered around from desk to desk like fallen angels, trying to comprehend what it was that had happened to them. It was a tragic thing to see it slowly dawn upon them that they had been trapped by the very gods they had been seeking to imitate.

There was B. J. McDarrow, for example. He was one of our most impressive executives, known the length and breadth of the properties as 'B. J.' In the middle of a dreary afternoon, he dropped into a chair beside my desk.

'Well, Bob,' he said, in an attempt at heartiness, 'who're you working for to-day?' (That had become a standard jest during those days while the creditors were struggling for possession. 'Who're you working for to-day?' we would ask each other as we met, and then smile wryly and pass on.)

I noticed that 'B. J.' looked haggard. 'It's a bad business, Bob,' he said. 'I took Junior out of school to-day. Could n't stand the tuition.'

He hitched up his chair. 'You know, I did a little figuring this morning. Here I've been thinking all these years that I was a big shot in business. But do you know this, Bob — not one single year have I made as much money as I did before I sold my plant to Amalgamated.

'But the cash is n't the main point. Back there in Martinstown I was the boss. It may have been a one-horse town, but I was somebody in it. I was on the school board, and governor of the country club. We had our own farm, with a saddle horse, and a couple of cows, and we raised our own hogs.'

He was in reminiscent mood. He told me how he had first come to the town, a kid out of engineering school, and borrowed enough money to buy the local light plant. There were only three employees then, and 'B. J.' had put on creepers many a time and climbed the poles in those early days. Gradually he had branched out, taking in neighboring towns, until he developed a little system in six towns with twenty-two employees.

'It just seemed as if we had to keep on growing,' he said. 'We did n't know when we were well off. When I could n't swing the financing myself, I just naturally sold out to a big company. I thought I was fixed for life when I did it. Now look at me — a salaried man, hanging around and hoping that the receivers will give me a job to pay the rent.'

'B. J.' arose and returned to his office. An hour later a crisp little notice went the rounds. The trustees in bankruptcy had been appointed. Our services were no longer required.

VII

That evening I had dinner alone at the University Club. It was hard to shake the memory of that talk with McDarrow. I realized that his story was the story of all of them. Move Martinstown to Kentucky, or Indiana, or Nebraska — and you had them all. Small, independent proprietors who had sold out for a title and a salary in a glittering hierarchy which was bound to crumble.

Their experience was not extraordinary. I thought of the others who had sold out because they thought they 'just naturally had to keep on growing.' I thought of Jo Morgan, account representative of our advertising agency, who had traded in his little business for a meaningless title in a big concern. And Adams, sales manager for our printers — now in fear of his job, and longing for the small-town weekly in Virginia which he had sold ten years ago.

It was the same story for us all. Like Icarus, we had flown too high. Now we were cast down, broken and bleeding. But the experience might not be in vain if it taught us true humility and the importance of simple things. Perhaps, when the pain was healed, we would return to our small enterprises and a way of life which would be simpler, more durable, and more sincere.

There was comfort in the thought. Already I could imagine McDarrow back in Martinstown, presiding at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce.

I strolled into the library. On the table was a business journal, and I started reading.

'Experience of business after the depression of 1921,' it read, 'is of interest to all business men to-day. The large companies toppled under heavy overheads and high fixed charges. But the small companies without these burdens advanced and expanded to become the big companies of 1929. Now the giants have again fallen. It is a time when small companies with aggressive management might well begin to plan their programmes of expansion. . . .'

As I laid down the magazine, I could perceive another New Era waiting to begin. I had a feeling that, sometime, I was going to meet B. J. McDarrow again, in a club car, on his way to a convention.

THE POETRY OF T. S. ELIOT

BY THEODORE SPENCER

I

It is common knowledge that in most circles where contemporary poetry or criticism is discussed no name carries with it more prestige than that of T. S. Eliot. Mr. Eliot has not published much, — about a hundred and fifty pages of verse, three or four small books or pamphlets of criticism, and one larger collection, — but these have been enough to give him a position, both in England and in America, which is unique at the present time.

To anyone acquainted with his writing, this can readily be understood. For nearly everything Eliot has written has about it that air of authority which other writers try, usually with small success, to achieve; the kind of authority which we unmistakably recognize in poets so apparently different as Villon and Wordsworth, and which is the result of the true poet's special gift: the ability to perceive new emotional relationships, and to express them in language that is arresting and alive.

It is because he has this talent that Eliot's poetry often seems so difficult to anyone reading it for the first time. When a man tries to say new things in new words, it requires a deliberate effort on the part of the reader to follow him; old emotional habits must be stretched and the new set of associations and references, like a new suit of clothes, must be worn before they feel as if they belonged to the person who is fitting them on. Eliot, instead of trying to overcome this difficulty, has gone in the other direction and has emphasized it. 'Our civilization,' he says in one of his critical essays, 'comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning.'

The poet must go further than this. The audience he addresses depends, in the present day, so little on the vividness of the spoken word, its reading — of newspapers, magazines, and so forth — has tended to make its emotional responsiveness to words so sluggish, that a shock is necessary if attention is to be aroused. Eliot, particularly in his early poems, makes good use of this necessity; the well-known opening of his 'Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' is a perhaps exaggerated example: —

> Let us go then you and I
> When the evening is spread out against the sky
> Like a patient etherized upon a table.

The violence of the image, the jolt the etherized patient gives to our usual set of associations with evening, is deliberately aimed for; it is not meant, of course, to be visualized — it is there to prepare us for a new attitude to experience. For the poem it introduces, though its form is somewhat like that

of Browning's dramatic monologues, is unlike anything we have had in English poetry before.

One of Eliot's earlier poems (it was written shortly after his graduation from Harvard in 1910), it describes a shy, ineffective, semi-romantic character, who would like to make love but does n't dare to, who moves in a rather cheaply sophisticated environment, whose shyness and general absence of vitality make him question, as a defense against his lack of daring, the value of the things he has not the courage to attain — the kind of elderly young man, in short, who, in many disguises, can to-day be found almost everywhere; too sensitive for action, and too self-conscious for wisdom, he is made miserable and pathetic by a world he can neither admire nor despise.

'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' is representative of several of Eliot's earlier poems, of a time when he was concerned with episodes and individuals, rather than the general contemporary situation. It is the title poem of his first collection, *Prufrock and Other Observations*, which was printed in 1917. The word 'Observations' is significant, for all Eliot's poems at this period are objective, with only the most indirect and occasional references to the writer's personal feeling. Unlike most minor poets of our time (Eliot, with dubious accuracy, somewhere refers to himself as a minor poet), he has never been concerned with merely putting his own emotions into graceful language. He has been after something much more important — the accurate expression of the chief attitudes to experience of his generation. This is why he deserves, and repays, as careful a reading as possible. And, paradoxically, he has proved that he belongs to the authentic tradition of the great English poets by being, on the surface, most unlike them.

II

It was his method which puzzled his first readers, and made his poetry seem difficult and obscure. It consists chiefly of three things — impersonality, abundant use of quotation, and contrast. 'One is prepared for art,' Eliot states, 'when one has ceased to be interested in one's own emotions and experiences except as material. . . . The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.'

That Eliot has tried to achieve this 'extinction of personality' in his own poetry I have already mentioned, and that he has succeeded, as a good poet must, will not be denied, I think, by any of his readers. But the second element of his method, his use of quotations from other poets, is one of the things which at first seemed most bewildering, and has since caused the most unfavorable criticism. It is, however, a very essential part of Eliot's technique, and its effect is an important element in the particular tone we get from his poetry.

Though we can easily overemphasize the importance of this device, nevertheless it is interesting, as an example of the way Eliot composes, to look at one poem to see how it is done. I quote the first three stanzas of a short poem called 'Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar.'

Burbank crossed a little bridge
  Descending at a small hotel;
Princess Volupine arrived,
  They were together, and he fell.

Defunctive music under sea
  Passed seaward with the passing bell
Slowly: The God Hercules
  Had left him, that had loved him well.

The horses, under the axletree
  Beat up the dawn from Istria
With even feet. Her shuttered barge
  Burned on the water all the day.

The first stanza is merely expository. We gather that the scene is in Venice, that Burbank, with his Baedeker, is probably a rather serious-minded young man (later he meditates 'on Time's ruins and the seven laws'), and that he succumbs, through force of circumstances rather than because of his own volition, to the decadent charms of the Princess Volupine (her hands, we are told, are meagre, blue-nailed, phthisic). The poem is an impressionistic picture of contemporary Venice, its decline from glory to a haven for tired love-makers and cheap sight-seers, such as the cigar-smoking Bleistein who turns up later, a Venice that is decayed and, like the Princess, morally phthisic, a Venice that is a symbol for the fatigued cheapness of contemporary civilization, only kept alive by vulgar cosmopolitan promoters, who, as far as art and taste and beauty are concerned, are still in the 'protozoic slime.' All this is brought out in the remainder of the poem. But in order to make this impression vivid, we need a contrasting picture, and we get it in the second and third stanzas, which are a patchwork of beautiful phrases from the past, the past to which the glory of Venice now belongs. To mention only the most obvious of these references, the phrase 'defunctive music' is taken from Shakespeare's poem, 'The Phœnix and the Turtle,' and the barge which 'burned on the water all the day' is the barge of Cleopatra, as she moved in splendor down the Nile.

III

Now this may seem a thoroughly pedantic way of writing poetry, and it would be if the references were put there merely to show how learned and clever the poet was, and hence were not made an integral part of the poem. But in this case they are integral parts of the poem, and the effect they achieve could be achieved by no other means. Mr. Eliot is an extremely economical poet; he gets the maximum result from the minimum number of words. These echoes from the literature of the past, which, even if one does not recognize their origin (it is by no means essential to do so), have a remarkable beauty, bring out in only eight lines what it would otherwise take perhaps eight pages to convey.

The method is, to be sure, indirect; we miss any positive statement of what the poem is about, such as we are accustomed to in Victorian poetry, and the effect made on us by the poem, in spite of its sharp individual phrases, is consequently intangible and difficult to describe. But that is as it should be; if we can give an accurate paraphrase of a poem, it is sure to be a bad poem, for then its language is not inevitable. There are no poems harder to paraphrase than Eliot's. He is aiming for a deeper level of our consciousness than most poets aim for; he does not so much make our associations for us as compel us to make them, under his direction, for ourselves; in other words, as we read his poems, we have to be poets too.

This indirect, allusive method is, of course, dangerous. The poet who employs it must be extremely sensitive to the difference between private and shared associations, or he will find himself, like some of Eliot's imitators, writing poetry which he alone can understand. But if it is successful, and with Eliot it is nearly always successful (his most notable failure is at the end of *The Waste Land*), the method not only creates a new kind of poetry which is very stimulating to read, it also opens a wider field of awareness for the poet to exploit. The poem slips, to put it crudely, under the top layer of our consciousness and sets our associative

processes to work in a new way: our responses are not *dictated* by a sharply defined statement of how the poet felt himself and hence wants us to feel; they are *suggested* to us, so that we must make the final synthesis ourselves.

The point comes out very clearly if we compare any of Eliot's poems with such a poem as Wordsworth's 'Daffodils.' In the latter the poet does nearly all our work for us; we see the daffodils and we share Wordsworth's emotion about them, for he guides us carefully, by explicit statement, over the ground he has prepared for us. Eliot also guides us carefully (he would be a poor poet if he did not), but by allusion rather than explicit statement. It is a method as difficult to use as it is stimulating for the reader to follow, and it is probably the only method which a poet who has to say what Eliot has can use with much effect.

For during the first fifteen years of his poetic career — until, roughly, 1925 — Eliot had one very important state of mind to express. The subjects of 'Prufrock' and 'The Portrait of a Lady' are seen as the results of a civilization and a mental attitude which lead only to futility. And in *The Waste Land*, the culminating poem of this period, the environment, the civilization itself, is described. The waste land is contemporary life, where there is no great passion, but only sordid lust; where the self-abnegation and wonder of religious emotion have degenerated into cheap fortune telling; where there is no external grandeur, but only a flat, commercial cosmopolitanism that is as shoddy as it is 'unreal'; where rich and poor alike find that their lives come nervously, wearily, to nothing; where futility and disillusionment are the result of all effort, and only in the memory of past visions of beauty and the far less certain hopes of some unity and order in the future can any satisfaction be found.

Now none of this could have been said directly and have carried any poetic conviction. Without specific details, the mere statement of the subject would have resulted in trite prose; to have elaborated the theme of futility in a poem the length of *Paradise Lost* would have been not only boring but inappropriate; a long poem needs action, which Eliot's theme cuts out, and it needs a generally accepted convention, which the literary habits of our time disallow. To be brief, and at the same time panoramic, was the poet's problem, and a method of indirect allusion, a kind of associative shorthand, was the best means to solving it.

IV

Equally important was the third technical device of those I have mentioned — the method of contrast. I have already given an example of Eliot's use of it in 'Burbank with a Baedeker.' Contrast of one kind or another appears everywhere in his poetry. Very frequently, as the phrase I have quoted from the opening of 'Prufrock' shows, he uses the shock of verbal contrast to stimulate his reader, to produce that emotional surprise so important in all good writing. In the same poem we come across the phrase, 'I have measured out my life.' It starts conventionally enough, but it ends with a sudden twist: 'I have measured out my life with coffee-spoons.' The words are as unexpected as they are appropriate to the poem in which they are placed.

Eliot, indeed, has done a considerable service in bringing the vocabulary of poetry back to the spoken word. It is a lesson he learned from the two poetic schools which were his chief masters: the late Elizabethans and the French

symbolists of the nineteenth century. For poetic language at the time he began to write, some twenty years ago, badly needed revivification; it needed it almost as badly as in the time of Wordsworth. The combination of a desire for melodious sound and the lack of emotional intensity which distinguish the writing of Tennyson had left English poetry in a state of verbal anæmia.

> Love doth give the whole;
> His range being high as heaven, as ocean deep,
> Wide as the realms of air or planet's curving
> sweep.

We have only to compare these lines by Tennyson's successor in the laureateship with any of Eliot's poems to see what he has done for the poetic vocabulary. He has given a tang to poetry which can only come from words that are alive because they are in constant use, and though at first sight this may seem to contradict what I have said about his habit of employing somewhat recondite quotations, such is not really the case. To appeal to the average cultivated mind as a *whole*, which is what Eliot is trying to do, one must draw sparks from as many facets of that mind as possible. Andrew Marvell, advertising, a learned vocabulary, Dante and the subway are all parts of our consciousness, and Eliot brings together, by employing both everyday speech and literary allusion, objects like these which apparently (to our impoverishment) have little connection with each other.

Eliot is, to be sure, only one of a number of recent poets who have injected new life into language by remarrying it to the common speech, but he is the most important. For he produces, by using words not ordinarily associated with poetry, a kind of double effect which the work of his contemporaries lacks.

> My smile falls heavily among the bric-à-brac. . . .
> While the true church need never stir
> To gather in its dividends. . . .
> I have seen the eternal footman hold my coat and
> snicker.

General ideas are tied to concrete objects, are pinned to the particular, in a way that gives the reader an intellectual as well as an emotional pleasure. Though the underlying rhythm, the 'personality,' is different, it is an effect which we can find in writers so apparently remote from Eliot as Emily Dickinson and Emerson, as well as Donne and Laforgue, who are avowedly his masters. Perhaps it is a way of writing which comes naturally to Americans, or at least to New Englanders, whose colony was founded at the time when this style, since called 'metaphysical,' was at the height of its popularity in England. It would give Yankee wit an interesting genealogy if we could prove that its father was the poetry of Donne and its descendant the poetry of Eliot.

V

But Eliot's use of contrast is not merely verbal. Far more important is the way in which it is employed as a part of what I have called his 'associative shorthand' to make his meaning emotionally succinct. In *The Waste Land* the device is used again and again. For instance, near the beginning, we are given a remarkably beautiful passage describing a mystical experience arising, it would seem, from sublimated passion; immediately afterward follows an account of Madame Sosostris, who

> Had a bad cold, nevertheless
> Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
> With a wicked pack of cards.

This lady represents, clearly enough, the degeneration of what had once

been religious ritual (the cards she uses are from the Tarot pack, which have a religious origin) into the cheapest kind of vulgarity. The contrast between the two descriptions brings out the meaning without the necessity of direct statement.

Again, in the second section of the poem, called 'A Game of Chess,' we are given two contrasting and complementary pictures: one is of the most lavish room imaginable, full of the glitter of jewels 'from satin cases poured in rich profusion,' where strange perfumes lurk among rich tapestries; the other is of a scene in a cheap pub, where a cockney woman is telling about a sordid conversation she has had with a friend, while the barkeeper is trying to get her out because it is closing time. Both are pictures of emotional and spiritual emptiness, and they are put here together to show how this emptiness extends through all classes of society.

At the end there is a further contrast still. The pub is closed; people are saying good-bye to each other; they speak a little drunkenly, slurring their flatly spoken syllables: —

> Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May Goonight.
> Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.

And then immediately afterward we are given the clear last words of Ophelia, sweetly spoken as she leaves the stage: —

> Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.

But quotation and contrast not only appear in individual scenes of *The Waste Land;* they also form the fundamental structure of the whole poem. To give his work a unity of reference, Eliot uses the old myth of a land whose soil is barren and its people starving because its king has been made impotent by a wound. That is, he employs an old story in *The Waste Land* for the same reason that James Joyce, in *Ulysses*, employs the story of the *Odyssey;* to give the incoherent material of modern life the pattern which it does not appear to contain in itself, but which is essential if it is to be expressed in art. And the story of the waste land is particularly appropriate for what Eliot wants to say, because, since it is a survival of a vegetation myth, it unites sex and religion. In modern life these two most important passions, the physical and the spiritual, are separated, cheapened, and betrayed, and our land is laid waste because of it. The myth is useful both as background and as a mine for symbols, and it gives the poem a richness it could not otherwise have.

It is this richness of association, combined with Eliot's customary condensation, that makes the poem difficult. But it does not seem to-day nearly as difficult as it did when it first appeared ten or eleven years ago. We have grown accustomed to the technique; more important, we have increasingly grown to share the point of view that technique is used to express. It is not for nothing that Eliot's *Poems* have been on the shelves of all intellectual undergraduates, in England and America, ever since they have been published, for they describe, more wittily, more accurately, and more effectively than anything else, the disastrous and empty world that is apparently our heritage.

VI

To have done this was an admirable achievement, but it made many people interested in poetry wonder what could follow. No poet can afford to ring changes on the theme of starvation and futility for long, and Eliot was too good

a poet not to be aware of it. But it was some time before one could determine which direction he was going to take. The only poem he published for three or four years seemed to be a kind of coda to *The Waste Land;* it was called, in its final form, 'The Hollow Men,' and consisted of a set of five short pieces describing a condition halfway between death and life, as if the writer were still in the valley of the shadow of the waste land and were uncertain as to the authenticity of any light that might lead him out of it.

There is some beautiful writing in these little poems, and they show a definite change in Eliot's technique. The verbal shock and the resultant wit of the earlier style have gone. The language depends more than ever on overtones for its effect, the style is richer and simpler, the rhythms more haunting and slow. I quote one of the most successful and one of the least known of these poems (it was not printed as part of 'The Hollow Men') to show the change: —

> Eyes that last I saw in tears
> Through division
> Here in death's dream kingdom
> The golden vision reappears
> I see the eyes but not the tears
> This is my affliction
>
> This is my affliction
> Eyes I shall not see again
> Eyes of decision
> Eyes I shall not see unless
> At the door of death's other kingdom
> Where, as in this,
> The eyes outlast a little while
> A little while outlast the tears
> And hold us in derision.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to give an exact description of what Eliot is saying here, which, I imagine, is just as he would have it. The sonority, the repetitions, are there to appeal directly to our mind as a whole, but the attack is different from what it was in the earlier poems. Here Eliot is trying, more subtly, to satisfy not only our reason and our conscious associations, but also the subconscious store from which they spring. It is poetry the rhythm and tone of which, more than of most poetry, absorb us into itself, and when we are pressed to explain why it moves us so much, we cannot answer satisfactorily, for all our faculties have been involved and analysis seems irrelevant in consequence.

This is even more true of Eliot's most recent collection of poems, *Ash Wednesday* (1930). This little book has been received, on the whole, with disappointment by most of Eliot's admirers, for it seems, at first sight, less vigorous than *The Waste Land,* and its subject matter, which is religious, is apparently outside the central current of thought in our time. But I do not think that any careful reader will be able in the long run to agree with this opinion. These poems are not less vigorous than the earlier ones; on the contrary, they are more intense, they are more serious; if their passion is not at first recognizable, it is because it is a passion unfamiliar to most of us, the passion of humility.

The poems in *Ash Wednesday,* while apparently more personal than their predecessors, are in fact less personal than such a work as Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound,* which is, on the surface, not a personal poem at all. For Eliot's position in *Ash Wednesday* is psychologically comparable to Dante's in the *Purgatorio* (*Ash Wednesday* is full of 'purgatorial' images), and the 'I' who speaks, speaks in terms of something larger than itself, is viewed not as an individual, but as a humble and imperfect part of a spiritual whole. The background of reference in these poems is not a pagan ritual, but the Catholic Mass. The waste land has been crossed, and on the other side is the Christian religion.

At the first turning of the third stair
Was a slotted window bellied like the fig's fruit
And beyond the hawthorn blossom and a pasture scene
The broadbacked figure drest in blue and green
Enchanted the maytime with an antique flute.
Blown hair is sweet, brown hair over the mouth blown,
Lilac and brown hair;
Distraction, music of the flute, stops and steps of the mind over the third stair,
Fading, fading; strength beyond hope and despair
Climbing the third stair.

Lord, I am not worthy
Lord, I am not worthy

but speak the word only.

Quotation does not do justice to what I conceive to be the value of these poems; their rhythms are too subtly controlled and interdependent to be understood unless the whole poem is given. For, contrary to the general opinion, it seems to me quite clear that these poems represent a marked advance over *The Waste Land*. There is less wit, less sharp contrast, less vivacity, but there is a firmer mastery of language, a more sensitive control of rhythmic climax, and, as I have already implied, a greater intensity of feeling; and these things make good poetry.

VII

I have written so far almost entirely in praise of Eliot's poetry, for praise is what it almost entirely deserves. With the exception of W. B. Yeats, and it is hard to choose between them, he is undoubtedly the best of living English poets; his poetry will not only retain its validity for a long time to come, but future historians of our age, if they want to understand us, will have to refer to it for the finest emotional expression of our complicated and difficult situation.

But there are many people who think that Eliot's style is affected, that his poetry is written for a clique that lives, emotionally and intellectually, in a hothouse, that it is broken, fragmentary, and incomplete. The first two objections I have already tried to answer; it is true that the reader must have a fairly wide background of reference to get the full value of Eliot's writing, but in a final appreciation this background is forgotten. It is merely a scaffold; when one's understanding is built, the scaffold melts into the building and is forgotten. This can be seen clearly enough if we compare Eliot's work with that of another contemporary writer often associated with him — Ezra Pound. In most of Pound's verse, especially his recent *Cantos*, the scaffolding does *not* melt into the building, but remains uncomfortably in sight to harass the admirer of otherwise very interesting construction.

The third objection against Eliot's poetry, that it is incomplete, is less easy to deal with, for there is some justice to it. The end of *The Waste Land* is unsatisfactory; it attempts an answer when there are not enough materials for an answer, and we feel uneasy. Also the religious emotion of *Ash Wednesday*, regarded purely as religion, appears tentative, hesitant — a kind of last resort from despair. Perhaps this is true, but it does not affect the value of *Ash Wednesday* as poetry. The honesty of the emotion is self-evident; if that emotion includes doubt and hesitation as well as awe and belief, that is not the fault of the poet, but of the time in which he lives.

And one wonders if the religious subject matter of *Ash Wednesday* is as removed from the central current of our time as most critics would have us believe. Poets, says Mr. Herbert Read, bear the same relation to society as the antennæ of an insect to its body: they are 'feelers'; their sensibility is more acute, more advanced, than that

of their contemporaries, and what they feel to-day the rest of society will feel, in a more diluted form, to-morrow. Ten years ago, in *The Waste Land*, Eliot expressed a point of view which since that time has grown to be more and more widely held, until it is shared by any number of people who have never heard of Eliot or read a line of contemporary poetry. It is not by any means impossible that the attitude expressed in *Ash Wednesday* may be more common ten years from now than it is at the moment, and that Eliot has once more done his generation the service of clarifying and relieving its emotions by giving them permanent and convincing expression.

CHORE BOY

BY R. H. SHERRICK

I

In '61, the year in which he came of age, my grandfather married Laura Scholl. At the time of this event he received a title to his share of the Illinois claim that he and his brothers had helped their parents to 'prove up on.' There were two hundred acres in the portion. Eighty of them had been under cultivation for several years; the remaining hundred and twenty were still to be wrested from woodland and prairie. But there were buildings on the farm — a barn that had been made to stand for many years and the little house that was later to become the tenant house.

My grandparents took no honeymoon. Their marriage had been consummated in May, and spring planting was upon them. They moved at once into the little house, then quite new, and began to look forward to bumper harvests. They talked of how, year by year, new fields would be cut from the woodland; how with good luck the cattle and the horses and the hogs would increase themselves before the year was out. They thought of sheep to be raised and wool to be carded, of chickens and of geese; and of how, if things went well, they would have, sometime, a team of fine carriage horses.

Behind all this planning, in each ambition that the future was to see fulfilled, there lay, quiet and unspoken, a farmer's need for sturdy sons.

It had never occurred to my grandfather that the first child might not be a boy. His wife had considered this chance, but left it unspoken. And so, late in the following year, they found it necessary to reserve the name George for future use, and to substitute Nettie.

They laughed a little then, as though nature had played them a rather untimely but by no means irreparable jest, and two years later recalled the name George for further consideration. Their second daughter was christened Nan.

No other children were born to my grandparents for three years. By this time only sixty acres of the farm remained in woodland. Two hired men

helped with the work of the fields. Long lines of pompous geese paraded up and down the lane, and chickens scattered everywhere. Into these surroundings of rural felicity a third girl was born.

It was not that my grandparents objected to daughters. In those days a family was hardly complete without at least a few children of each sex. But girls grew up and married, and moved to other people's farms. It was hard to think that the broad, fertile fields, with no male heir to care for them, might some day be divided and sold to strangers. The thought of such a possibility caused my grandfather no little concern.

His desire for a son was further sharpened by an intermittent spring of inventive urges. He had a great many ideas — ideas for making a new kind of churn and a sling for hoisting hay, ideas for mole traps and wagon springs and pumps — if only he had time to develop them, even a few evening hours exempt from the daily round of chores. Chores and boys went very well together, so he thought hopefully of sons who might yet arrive.

It was easy in these imaginings to ignore the periods of infancy and childhood, and to think instead of robust and likable striplings who were gifted with special abilities when it came to managing horses and milking cows. He thought of these vague youths sometimes as he worked in the harvest field, gathering sheaves that any boy could gather and setting shocks that any boy could set. He thought of them when the evening chores were done, and when, resting his elbows on the barnyard gate, he looked out into the soft twilight that hung still and gray above the fertile land. But most of all he thought of them when into his mind there came the idea of a workshop — a workshop equipped with a forge and a bench and a quantity of good mechanic's tools. 'If we had a son,' he would think, 'he'd look after things a little, and maybe I could have an hour now and then.'

My grandmother shared this hope. It had not escaped her notice that, since the third girl was born, her husband had carefully avoided his jokes about sons. It seemed to her that he sometimes went a good deal out of his way to show how much he liked his little daughters.

II

The year 1873 was one of memorable events. At the close of it only twenty acres of the farm remained in woodland, and this was to be left uncut. A new house stood completed, gleaming in its fresh paint, and a tenant family moved into the little one. There were plenty of cows in the pasture. No one could have wished for better crops. The sheep had done well. My grandmother was selling poultry because she had too much of it. And a team of Morgans were in the stable. Thus, more than ever, everything was in readiness for a male heir when the fourth daughter was born.

Into this sonless household, early the following spring, there came a peddler. He was a forerunner of the modern book agent in that he offered for sale, in addition to pots and pans, household remedies, and horse liniment, a thick, gilt-lettered volume called *The Ragpicker's Curse*.

One of these books found a home in the walnut secretary my grandfather had built. It was a doleful book, dedicated to those unfortunate people of the large cities who spent a cruel and hungry life in gathering and sorting rags. What specific curse hung over them was not made clear, unless the woodcuts, speaking more impressively

than the text, were left to state it in very general terms. These woodcuts were as melancholy as they were profuse. They depicted dank basements in which feeble old women and starved-looking children sat among heaps of unsavory rags. There were dismal pictures of tenement dwellings, in which whole families crouched weeping around a fireless hearth. Small and mournful urchins — presumably the offspring of ragpickers — were to be seen sleeping like dogs in icy alleyways and in large packing boxes.

It was these last victims of The Curse who stirred my grandmother's deepest sympathy. For days she went about her household tasks pausing to sigh and to murmur, 'Poor things!'

My grandfather read the book also. One evening he looked up from its pages and said, 'I could use a good chore boy around here this summer.'

How much of this idea had arisen from the dolorous woodcuts, and how much from some new inventive urge pressing for a few hours' attention, it is hard to say. But there is no doubt that my grandmother's thoughts flew straight to the unhappy street waifs in their alleys and boxes, for she replied: 'With all the poor city children that have n't so much as a bed to sleep in, it looks as though a chore boy would be easy to find. Why don't you write to some Charity Home?'

There was further discussion, and it recurred during several days. On his next trip to Old Town, my grandfather ferreted out the address of a Chicago orphanage. He scrawled it across the envelope of a letter that was already written, and left this communication at the postal window of the general store.

In those days, contrary to my grandmother's supposition, orphans — except very small ones — were none too plentiful. American industry had newly entered a period of terrific growth, and orphans more than four feet high were much in demand for factory and mining purposes. It may have been because of this widespread opportunity for juvenile service that the institution to which my grandfather wrote was for the moment a little short of suitable chore boys. In any event, nearly three weeks elapsed before a reply came. The letter read, in part: —

> We have now, sir, a very exceptional boy, Leonard Crothland by name, and we beg to offer our opinion that he will serve you well in the capacity you mention. He is strong for his years and enjoys the best of health. He is not a great eater, but is used to work and needs no coddling.

The letter went on to say that the boy was available at once; was, in fact, being held in readiness pending the receipt of a specified sum of money. The money, it was briefly explained, would be needed for carfare and for 'changes in institutional records.' The letter concluded: —

> I remain, sir, your most obedient servant,
> SARAH TULKER,
> *Matron in Charge*

This communication had a depressing effect upon my grandfather. He said it sounded too much as though a boy were being offered for sale — an unfortunate tone of writing that placed him in the position of having sought to buy one. After he deducted the known cost of carfare from the stipulated sum, this dark notion gained considerable credence. Changing an institutional record, he thought, was a very costly process indeed, and he added that, in spite of all the lives and money poured out to fight the Rebels, the slaves were n't all freed yet. Then he turned to the matron's description

of the prospective chore boy, and found it far from satisfactory.

'A very exceptional boy,' he read again. Exceptional for what? 'Strong for his years . . . not a great eater.' How could that be?

At length his suspicions culminated in an aversion to the name of his correspondent. 'Tulker,' he kept repeating. 'Whether he needs it or not, I'll wager no boy gets much coddling from a woman with a name like that. Tulker! There's a nigger in *that* woodpile!' He enlarged upon the theme. 'And if he needs no coddling, what does he need — watching?'

But my grandmother would hear to no such interpretations of the letter.

'If you want a chore boy,' she said reasonably, 'and this woman has one for you, why don't you get him?' She returned to her vision of alleys and boxes. 'Poor thing! A summer with a bed to sleep in would n't hurt him any. And we have so much spare room now.'

III

On a morning late in May, my grandfather waited restlessly upon a little area of packed cinders that lay between the Old Town railway station and the tracks. The Chicago train was due, and the chore boy was due with it. As my grandfather paced back and forth, the idea of sending to the city for a boy about whom he knew nothing now struck him as being decidedly foolish. For the first time, he wondered how much that book about the ragpickers had influenced the enterprise. Then he felt more foolish than before.

His thoughts turned to the matron's letter. Two weeks had done nothing to clarify the contradictory description it contained. 'Not a big eater, but strong for his years. . . . I can't make anything out of that.'

In his own letter my grandfather had said, 'A boy about fourteen or fifteen years old.' How big, he wondered, would a boy be if he were fourteen and strong for his years? As big as Sam Morley's oldest? Too big to need coddling — maybe that's what she meant, that Tulker woman.

A score of dimly imagined boys came into his mind. Tall boys and short boys. Boys with freckles, like little Johnny Strodel. Boys without freckles, like big Johnny Croch. But none of these seemed to fit the veiled description provided by the Matron in Charge.

The whistle of the approaching train broke my grandfather's thoughts. He glanced about at his fellow waiters. They were two, lounging at ease on the station-house steps. They had brought their whittling from in front of the general store for the daily pleasure of 'watching the train come in.' Obviously, they were expecting no orphans. My grandfather envied them mildly.

A shrill scattering of small boys came suddenly around a corner. In their wake trailed the dull-witted son of a villager. Something about him held my grandfather's attention. He was an awkward, overgrown lad who walked with a peculiar swinging gait. His face was extravagantly pimpled, his lips were parted in a stupid grin. A quick animation seized this youth. Without discernible motive, he made a lunge at one of his smaller companions, swung him easily off the ground, and set him gently down again.

'Strong,' thought my grandfather; and Sarah Tulker, leaping unexpectedly into his mind, added, 'for his years.' At once my grandfather discovered in the village half-wit a living image of the boy he had come to meet. He tried to brush the impression aside,

but it persisted. Here, at last, was that anomaly, a boy who was strong for his years, who was not a great eater, and needed no coddling.

'I'll send him back on the next train,' thought my grandfather firmly.

IV

A moment later the train was in. It stopped with a long screeching of brakes. The passengers began to alight. There was old Colonel Hassel, who had made another trip to the city. . . . And Mrs. Cronway, come to visit her daughter again. . . . And a woman he did not know, trailed by two small boys.

My grandfather's eyes went back to the coach door. No one else appeared there. With quick relief he thought, 'He did n't come.'

The train started to move.

'B-o-o-a-rd,' the conductor cried, and swung up on the coach steps.

My grandfather began to whistle. He had started toward his team at the hitching rack when he felt a sharp tug at his sleeve. When he turned and found himself confronted by a small boy, he thought: 'One of that woman's boys.' But the woman was already a considerable distance away, and she seemed content with the custody of only one child.

As my grandfather's eyes came back to the sleeve tugger he dismissed a sudden possibility. No, this was no chore boy. He was n't big enough. Nine years old, perhaps, or ten. And he looked a little hollow-chested, and much too pale.

None the less, he asked, 'Are you Leonard Crothland?'

'Lenny,' the boy corrected briskly, and my grandfather became the subject of a cool and somewhat critical examination. There was an engaging assurance about this wisp of a boy. He swung a paper-wrapped bundle from both hands, and teetered from toes to heels on feet planted well apart. His lips puckered gravely as his round, solemn eyes went slowly over the person of his new employer.

My grandfather thought of the clumsy, dull-witted youth who had been in his mind, and laughed. This sound ended the examination. The boy's face cleared. He presented his credentials in a single sentence, 'I'm bigger 'n I look.'

My grandfather appraised the boy gravely, and replied at length, 'I see you are. Just the size for milking — if you don't sit down to it.'

For a moment they stood looking quite pleased with each other's wit. Then my grandfather led the boy to his wagon and swung him up to the seat. By the time the first of the three homeward miles was crossed, the two were on the best of terms.

They talked about horses. The boy, with his eyes on the reins, told how he watched them go by in the street — dray horses. He wanted to be a teamster some day. And my grandfather said there were twelve horses on his farm, not counting the colts; one team of Morgans that had come clear from Kentucky. They talked about the fields they were passing. The grass in one of them, it turned out, was n't grass at all. It was wheat. And the funny-looking thing a team was dragging across another field was a harrow. And the men at work in the distance were planting corn.

The boy's confidence deepened. He said, 'I'm glad your nose ain't crooked. The last one's nose was crooked.' This facial peculiarity seemed to have impressed itself on the boy's mind as a convenient index to character and temperament, for he added darkly, 'He got terrible mad.'

'The last one?' My grandfather

gazed in some astonishment at his slight seat mate. 'Have they had you out to work before this?'

'Oh, sure. Off an' on for a long time now. Weedin' onions mostly.'

My grandfather recalled the onion fields he had passed on infrequent trips to the city — great flat stretches of coal-black muck set with endless rows of green. And along these rows he had seen a small army of women and young children crawling on hands and knees.

'And then there's always scrubbin' an' such jobs at the Home,' the boy went on, glad of an opportunity to enlarge upon his abilities. 'And if I had n't come out here, I was a-goin' down in the coal fields somewheres to be a breaker boy.'

Weeding onions. . . . Breaker boy. That was worse than picking rags.

'And how did you leave Sarah Tulker?' my grandfather asked.

His chore boy considered the implications of this question, and hesitated.

'Kind of a funny name, Tulker,' my grandfather pursued. The tone of the remark dissolved the boy's caution. He returned to his own understanding of the former question.

'I left her without cryin' none,' he stated casually. 'Glad to. Even if you got onions.'

'Ah.' It was a significant sound. My grandfather muffled some further comment to say hastily: 'We have no onions except a few rows in the garden. Horses, but no onions.'

'Oh, horses . . .' The boy's eyes were on the reins again.

'You want to drive? . . . Here.'

They arrived at length at the west line of the farm. Then my grandfather said: 'See that big tree ahead there, boy? When you pass that tree, turn out a little and stop.'

Passing the tree, the chore boy turned out with such a will that one wheel of the wagon dropped into a little gully. They stopped well jolted.

V

This jolt stirred an idea in my grandfather's mind. It had appeared there before from time to time. He thrust it aside long enough to point out the boundaries of his land, the house and barn, the white gate through which they must turn presently, and to say: 'Well, Lenny, here's your home for the summer. Think you'll like it?' Then he turned his full attention to the idea, so that when the boy replied he heard only the words without their meaning.

He was thinking of a bolster that might be placed beneath a wagon box — a bolster made of two hickory beams with a row of strong coil springs between. It would take only a few evenings to try it out. . . . But there was the planting that had to be finished before another week had passed, and the hired men would n't get it done alone. . . . And the chores, as always. . . . The new boy was small, and it would take him some time to learn.

As it usually happened when his thoughts ran to this subject, my grandfather imagined a vague-looking youth, pleasant and very sturdy, who that evening would take care of the chores so his father might temper springs in the workshop.

His eyes went leisurely over the rolling fields spread out before him. Land that was his heritage, that he had worked so persistently to claim from wood and prairie. The tall, ambitious youth stayed in his thoughts, helping him now to plan for the purchase of new acres, sharing their work and their rewards. He saw the distant pasture dotted with grazing cows; the woodland that was always to remain

heavy and green as it was then; the big, new house and the red barn with his name painted in white letters on one gable end. . . . Daughters grew up and married. They moved to other farms. Whose name would be repainted there in fifty years?

'Yes,' thought my grandfather, 'if we had a son . . .'

VI

It was my grandmother who first perceived that her daughters would be no longer without a brother. This knowledge did not come to her in any flash of intuition. Except for his solemn eyes, there was nothing very prepossessing about the pale, undernourished boy whom her husband had led into the kitchen that morning in May. She said he looked as though the wind might blow him away, and that it was 'a sight' to see him eat.

It was a sight, no doubt, that she encouraged, for those who tell this story of the chore boy remember how, in the weeks that followed, a pair of slight shoulders straightened, and a sallow skin grew bronzed beneath the sun. They recall, too, how this boy began to follow my grandfather about like a second shadow; how he reproduced the casual remarks of his employer with such persistent accuracy that my grandmother took to calling him The Echo.

It is hard to say now just when it first occurred to her that Lenny could not easily be parted with. But when the summer had ended, when the time had come for the chore boy to be returned to Sarah Tulker, she dismissed all discussion of the project with a simple motion of the hand.

And so, one day, the Morgans were harnessed and my grandparents took the boy to Dixon 'to see about adoption papers.'

Here this story ought to end, but it never does. The oldest of my grandfather's daughters, who finds recurrent pleasure in telling of these incidents, has a favorite comment with which to finish off the tale. It has nothing to do with the chore boy and very little to do with the story, unless it be to draw some subtle moral from the perversities of Mother Nature. For the teller of this story always pauses a moment when she has done speaking of 'the adoption papers,' and then concludes: —

'And less than a year after they adopted Lenny, George was born.'

WILL HAYS

And What the Pictures Do to Us

BY NORMAN HAPGOOD

I

HUNDREDS of thousands have some image in their minds of the Will Hays of slight frame, quick step, blue eyes, and ears outstanding. A lesser number portray to themselves the brain that organizes, conciliates, and is the centre for the handling of complex trifles and massed affairs of business. How many undertake to conceive clearly the soul behind the blue eyes, the active temper, and the friendly contact? As easily essay a just emblem of the Middle West, with its Sunday schools side by side with the gangs who are now and then elected to high office in, say, Illinois, Ohio, or Indiana. For to comprehend Hays, and what he means in the element of American life in which he is the leader, is not only to understand his influence justly, but also to understand the strata in our country that Hays instinctively represents.

My first contact with William Harrison Hays was in the smooth relation of a newspaper correspondent to a Postmaster-General who knew how to handle publicity; and since Hays ran his big machine with quiet mastery, and understood his hundred million masters, the contact was pleasing. There stands out in my memory a dinner, at a small round table, to which Hays came to help give to H. G. Wells a just conception of the United States of America. On his preceding trip to this country Wells had frankly and without urbanity complained, at a more elaborate function, that his host had gathered only the type of intellectual who could as well be found in London, wherefore the same host undertook on this occasion to present in Hays an aspect of American thought less likely to be familiar to the visitor.

This time the world-envisaging Briton expressed no disapproval. The contribution of Hays was a lyric picture of the inland small town; no apology for its provincial aspects, but a happy celebration of the new dresses and washed faces seen along the road to church. It was the Presbyterian elder unfolding his heart, but not the elder as we commonly imagine him. Indeed, looking at Hays, and seeing him in the light of politics, moving pictures, and social charm, one may find at first a difficulty in placing him in a small-town church universe — real as we know that universe has ever been to him. About the church and religion he has not been as articulate as about the principles behind his most conspicuous undertaking. It is a real interest none the less — a part of that picture he sees of average goodness and contentment; part of his saga of the masses. From early childhood to now there has been comfortable identity between him and the standards of his place and era.

II

It was in Sullivan, Indiana, that our hero appeared, on the fifth of November, 1879. His father was a successful local lawyer, and the head of the firm which now has Will at the top of its letter paper. Exactly on the day he became of age Will was admitted to the bar, as his natural destiny. Already he had started in politics, beginning at the age of sixteen, when his father took him to the convention that nominated McKinley — a favorable start in conservatism, since it was the year of the scare over Bryan. Will, faithful to the past, to-day looks back on that convention as the outstanding political experience of his life.

Early he took hold of the principal groupings of his town, joining the Masons and, as he puts it, 'about all the other lodges.' It was part of his gospel of the excellence of the little place, of the democracy in which the most respected worker in the church, the Grand Master in the Lodge, the leader in charity work, may be the carpenter, the coal man, the brick mason — and was. He has never been a drinker, never a smoker — thus from another angle reflecting the standards held to be best by the world into which he had been harmoniously introduced.

In school, and at the Presbyterian Wabash College at Crawfordsville, it was in oratorical contests that he stood out, preparing for the law but no less for public life. Even before he was of age he was precinct committeeman, and, beginning when he was twenty-five, he was for four years chairman of the Republican County Committee, most of this time also serving as chairman of the Speakers' Bureau of the Republican State Committee. At thirty-one he began three years of work as city attorney of Sullivan. At thirty-five he became chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, and four years later was made chairman of the Republican National Committee. By this time, 1918, the United States had gone into the war, and Hays, not accepted for the army because of his light weight, became chairman of the State Council of Defense.

Chairman of the National Committee he still was when Warren G. Harding was nominated for the Presidency, and in the campaign his success was undoubted, both as an organizer and as a raiser of campaign funds. In regard to the funds there was later an investigation in the Senate, in which Hays was grilled, and which left on the public the impression that he had things to conceal. He admitted making a call on Harry Sinclair, later notorious in the oil scandals. His success in politics was not the expression of any cause, but was based on work, shrewdness, party loyalty, and the faculty we call executive. Many have expected from him what there was no reason to expect, and what indeed might have been impossible for any man.

Hays was clearly a success as Postmaster-General in the Harding cabinet. His knowledge of politics, his administrative endowment, and his tact were admirably fitted to the post. Therefore one day, in the third year of his cabinet experience, Hays remained in his rooms at the Wardman Park Hotel, where he received certain gentlemen who had made a pilgrimage to Washington in order to offer him a hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year to drop politics and devote himself to organizing, harmonizing, and smoothing the path of the cinema industry.

His resignation took effect on March 4, 1922, and he at once became president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America.

III

Hays likes to tell of a certain incident that was in his memory as he prepared to take his seat as chief director of the business side of a new and hugely popular art. It was during the Christmas recess that he, bringing some cowboy suits to his son and nephews in Indiana, heard them disputing about what rôles each was to have; Bill Hart, with his guns, was the favorite, and Douglas Fairbanks, less gory, was accepted by one of the boys only as a concession. He told me that this incident printed on his mind the importance of what he was about to undertake.

Those, however, who were to pay his salary suffered not at all from reflections on the moral effect of their productions. The benefits they hoped from the services of the cabinet officer were several and definite: —

1. Movements toward censorship were vigorous in a number of states. It was thought that Hays, as well as anybody in the country, would be able to prevent the passage of such legislation. He has done it.

2. Behind the political impulse toward censorship lay certain bodies of opinion, notably the churches. In understanding such moral opposition, and dealing with it, Hays was judged by the picture magnates to be second to none. In my opinion, the best tribute that can justly be paid him is to say that in forming groups inside his organization to keep in touch with every kind of expressed opinion, to answer weekly thousands of letters, and to bring better standards from outside to the attention of producers, he has done all that circumstances have permitted.

3. The United States Post Office, the largest distributing agency in the world, was being handled with ease by its head. The picture business, in its three branches of production, distribution, and exhibition, was in utter confusion, and needed an executive with prestige and talent to give it unity. Nobody doubts that he has accomplished this work with skill. He has been attacked, indeed, for creating too much unity; for building a monopoly too complete for the public good.

Perhaps the employers gave out the story that Hays was to be a 'tsar'; certainly he did not. There never was such an intention. If the history of Hays had been that of a boss-reformer, he never would have seen his present salary. Too much has been expected of him by the 3 per cent (to use his own estimate) who go to the theatre for originality, ideas, and literature. The wishes of the 3 per cent do bother him. Their wishes count with him. He does what he can for them. But he knows that he is dealing with 97 per cent; that nine out of ten enter the theatre for what is commonly called amusement; and that what amuses them is naïve, romantic, and forced. If what is popular happens to be 'sophisticated' and of the moment, it is not less naïve; if it undertakes to be daring, even wicked, it is not more intelligent, or less banal. Hays never dreamed he could make the pictures satisfactory to people whose pleasure is gained in the higher thinking. He did have, and still has, the wish to have the pictures do no harm to the moral sense, as represented by earnest churchgoers, Boy Scouts, and women's clubs — what in some localities are called 'just folks.' In so far as such kinds of sentiment and morality are organized and articulate, Hays showed at once a desire to coöperate with such groups, to make his cruder associates realize the cash value of conciliating virtue.

IV

Although the moral, artistic, and intellectual product is what has been

most discussed, the need of reconciling the business desires of producers with those of distributors and exhibitors was, in 1922, uncomfortably urgent. When Hays took the presidency, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc., included eight producers and one distributor, and it produced about 60 per cent of American films. By 1930, of twenty-five members, twenty-one were producing companies, three were manufacturers of equipment, one was engaged exclusively in distribution, and it was a subsidiary of a producer; and, of the twenty-one producers, three were also distributors and one was a manufacturer of equipment. As the combination gained in strength, it became more and more necessary to study the anti-trust laws carefully — a task which is not peculiar to the picture industry, but is facing all business, as the nation considers the nature and effects of competition in the light of the breakdown of 1929. There have been lawsuits, and Hays has taken the leading part in meeting them, and has been the leading villain to those who dislike the so-called monopoly and the mental food provided by it, but he has kept the peace.

It has been said of him that he never 'knocks,' but always 'boosts'; that he uses bricks, not as missiles, but for building; and as one observes the gayety with which he goes off to difficult business meetings, one easily realizes that his spirit is most apposite for settling the numberless disputes which complicate relations among those producing, distributing, and exhibiting. In promoting arbitration he has been brilliantly successful, and this side of his activities alone would make him secure in his post. He earns his salary, regardless of higher qualities. As Hays has undoubtedly strengthened the combination, it is fair to ask if in so doing he has hurt the possibilities of progress in the cinema. I doubt it.

Thirty years ago there was a combination called usually the Theatrical Trust, or Syndicate, headed by Charles Frohman and Al Hayman, of New York, the firm of Klaw and Erlanger, of New York, and Nixon and Zimmerman, of Philadelphia. Among them these three firms had obtained possession of so many theatres that for a time they could dictate routing and thereby control the destinies of other producing managers, of local theatres, of actor-managers, of dramatists and players. Those of us who in those days represented the intellectual element in criticism looked upon this phenomenon with dislike, urging that mere money-making was thus made more predominant, uniformity and the commonplace were aided, originality met a new difficulty, leadership was discouraged. William Dean Howells went so far as to say: 'Not merely one industry, but civilization itself is concerned, for the morals and education of the public are directly influenced by the stage. Everyone who takes a pride in the art of his country must regret a monopoly of the theatre, for that means "business" and not art.' And Thomas Bailey Aldrich: 'The inevitable result of a Theatre Trust would be deterioration in the art of acting and discouragement of dramatic literature.'

These gloomy forebodings, expressed at the time also by the author of this article, have not been realized. New York, from offering in its theatres far less of interest than Berlin, Vienna, Moscow, Paris, or London, now can make a fair claim to be on the whole second to none in what may be seen. The American dramatist is far ahead of where he stood at the opening of the century. All over the land are experimental theatres that are full of health. The legitimate theatre was able not

only to survive the syndicate and its fleeting monopoly; it has continued to improve in intellectual quality since the advent of the moving pictures threatened it with extinction. It is true that in many small places the regular theatre has gone over to the pictures, and so taken away the brief visits of traveling companies, but the loss to the culture of the nation has not been great, and the money troubles of the professional theatre owners have been a stimulant to local and idealistic effort.

I am giving a personal judgment, and must add that in so far as Hays has centralized power over production he is held by much respectable opinion to have kept pictures on a lower level than might otherwise have been reached.

Perhaps my reasons for defending Hays on this monopoly issue are relevant to the question of his account before Saint Peter. In my opinion, the outlook for safe profits in the pictures is now bad, and I think the monopolistic aspect, therefore, of the Hays organization need not dismay the mind that has perspective. We are still in the period of huge money costs, which are likely to continue while the art is violently experimental in its mechanism and uneducated in its personnel; and these large investments call for leaders who think in money. Some producers are now in the hands of their bankers, so that the bankers have their say about what shall be produced. A high percentage of those at the top are the same men who, when Mr. Edison invented the motion picture, added the idea to their nickelodeons and shooting galleries. It is likewise true that, of the chiefs operating in Hollywood, not many would be called adult. A picture is more expensive than a play, but nevertheless there is no reason to be sure that the cinema will not begin to break into smaller and more significant units before many years, just as the regular theatre has already done. When this happens, men of light will not fare as badly as Eisenstein, Reinhardt, and Nemorovich-Danchenko fared in Hollywood.

The more money the big film business loses, of course, the better. The larger the investment, the more necessary is it to have stories and treatment that please ninety persons out of a hundred, and such a percentage means the commonplace or worse. When, in the normal course of speculative commercialism and purely mechanical progress, the product drops into smaller pieces, it will adapt itself better to intellectual expression.

It may seem inconsistent for me to say that Hays is doing no harm in strengthening central control, and yet to add that, when decentralization comes, improvement is likely to follow. There is no inconsistency. Hays and his combination do not prevent the growth of the most promising smaller units. What they interfere with is other business enterprises on no higher plane than their own, and often on lower. The truly superior film can be stabilized only by an increased demand.

It is this belief that keeps me from giving much space to the Brookhart bill, which is the most conspicuous political move that Mr. Hays will need to take the lead in killing. It undertakes to prevent block contracts between producer and exhibitor — a form of contract in which the local picture manager, in order to obtain the product of a certain firm, has to contract for the whole of it, with the privilege of a slight percentage of rejection. The bill now being much talked about makes such a contract illegal, and thus undertakes to put the local manager in a position where he can buy pictures singly according to his preference. The probability of passage I should estimate to

be slight. Arguments that will be used by Mr. Hays, quietly or publicly as may be required in the various stages, will be, first, that large sums of money cannot be risked in production without a secured market; and, second, that there is no sign whatever that the local manager would reflect a taste higher than that exhibited by the producers. The second of these two considerations is the one that will concern the family with children. It will, in general, harmonize with the facts, but in some localities it will not. The first argument, plus constitutional considerations, is likely to be the ground on which the bill will be defeated.

V

What does Mr. Hays see as he sits at his desk and reads the figures about those productions that arouse praise among the fastidious? He sees that: —

The Scarlet Letter was produced with the recommendation of Protestant clergymen, and after production it was attacked by other Protestant clergymen, because in it a clergyman showed a human weakness.

The King of Kings, made with the coöperation of Jewish leaders, was so vigorously attacked later by Jewish organizations that it had to be extensively altered.

Disraeli was received with plaudits by all the better film people, and lost a fortune.

Abraham Lincoln had a similar fate.

Grass shows that the screen can do what has never been possible, and all the parents in my circle had their children see it, yet its losses were heavy.

Such facts make Hays unhappy, and he works genuinely toward organizing such support for better films as will make them a more promising investment. Can the economic aspect of the motion picture and its cultural-moral aspect be brought into harmony? As an affirmative answer to this question Mr. Hays likes to cite *The Man Who Played God*, which started as a failure and was turned by praise, especially in the pulpit, into a success.

Among his official posts, inside the organization, Mr. Hays is 'spokesman for the association in all communications to the public.' He has built up the 'Public Relations Department,' for the purpose of 'stimulating better audience appreciation' and also for giving help to local groups that wish to develop satisfactory community programmes. Within three months after taking office he began a series of conferences with representatives of such organizations as the Russell Sage Foundation, the Girl Scouts, and the Boy Scouts, which resulted in the Committee on Public Relations, predecessor of the Department of Public Relations. It represented, besides the three organizations just named, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the International Federation of Catholic Alumnæ, the National Education Association, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the American Library Association, and the Y. M. C. A. Naturally such a combination for bringing public opinion into joint action with film production would have to act mostly through small committees. One committee has had to do with the selection of films especially adapted for children; another has concerned itself especially with educational pictures; there has been work on patriotic pictures by representatives especially interested in patriotism. The various groups endeavor to increase attendance at the films which they favor; some films have been furnished without charge.

There has been some trouble. Julius

Barnes, representing the United States Chamber of Commerce, resigned from the Committee on Public Relations, and in 1924 the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the General Federation of Women's Clubs withdrew, all of these withdrawals being on close differences of judgment. The General Federation resumed relations. Among productions that have been assisted by these affiliated organizations are *America*, *Romola*, *The Ancient Mariner*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and *Evangeline*.

The Department of Public Relations has given attention to children and to Saturday-morning programmes. The lists furnished by the Hays organization have been somewhat freely criticized as not suitable for children, but there are at least constant experiment and experience. The three national organizations which have most fully developed their programmes in connection with the Hays machinery are the International Federation of Catholic Alumnæ, the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution, and the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Many organizations publish lists of pictures with comments, so that any parents who care to take the trouble will be able to learn much about the programmes accessible. One of the most persistent and influential forces bearing on the quality of pictures has been the voluntary association known as the National Board of Review, with which are affiliated many local councils. In an excellent study carried on by the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America these illustrations are given: —

In Macon, Georgia, the better-films committee that coöperates with the National Board of Review has representatives of the Macon playgrounds, the Art Association, the Parent-Teachers Association, the League of American Penwomen, the Catholic Women's Club, the Board of Education, the Society of Colonial Dames, the Council of Jewish Women, the American Legion, the Y. W. C. A., the Macon History Club, and the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal churches.

The Better Films Council of Rhode Island has delegates chosen by the State Federation of Women's Clubs, the State Congress of Parents and Teachers, the W. C. T. U., the Federation of Women's Church Societies, the Association of University Women, the Sunshine Association, the Girl Scouts, the International Association of Catholic Alumnæ, the Rhode Island Library Association, the State Federation of Music Societies, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the State Council of Women.

The Chicago Joint Committee on Motion Pictures is composed of two delegates from each of forty organizations, including church bodies and civic organizations, but principally women's clubs.

The degree to which such local influences are brought to bear on the producer and on the attendance at the local moving-picture houses naturally differs greatly. Some, in addition to their published lists, give regular radio talks in which they broadcast information about pictures that are immediately to be offered in their vicinity, and also take special measures to assure in advance a good reception for any uncommonly good picture about to be seen. Parties, telephone 'chains,' and posters are among these stimulants. As could be guessed, the attitude of the local managers toward such community activity varies from cordiality to resentment. As far as the national spokesman is concerned, there can be no doubt that the heart of Mr. Hays has been genuinely in the ever-continuing and ever-difficult task of making

enlightened opinion an increasing force.

It should be said, however, that his perspective naturally differs from that of a clergyman or other citizen who is primarily a moralist; for while Hays is always oiling and greasing his machinery for moral progress, he is the employee of business men and inevitably has in his mind all that can be said to the public on behalf of things more or less as they are. The most adequate brief statement of this side of his propaganda is that motion pictures are primarily amusement; that amusement is right and valuable; and that the masses themselves must be the final judges of what it is that gives them amusement. If they are not interested in *Grass* or *Abraham Lincoln*, it is simply too bad, and we must wait for a better world; a world, let us say, in which all high-class pictures will be received as favorably as *Arrowsmith* or *The Covered Wagon*.

VI

What is it in the situation that causes so many parents and other citizens acute alarm? In answering this question I shall be more skeptical than Mr. Hays is himself, for he (unlike the present writer) accepts prevailing views of morality, and argues only about whether certain pictures are in conflict with them.

Take the much-discussed gang picture, for example. Since Miss Lillian Gish is one of the most intelligent stage people of my acquaintance, I may quote her as saying, in a private conversation, 'If I had children I should not care to have them attend those pictures. What is dangerous about them is that the actors who are cast for gang leaders are in their own personalities attractive, and through that fact are admired by boys.' Certainly I should regret to have my children see these films. In their environment it would not lead them toward crime, but would be part of a more general curse on the pictures, the prevailing falsity in values. The public believes that criminals are created in the picture houses. On the whole, expert students of crime do not. Mr. Hays has recently congratulated both the public and the industry on the lessened production of these pictures.

Sex will continue to be a much more difficult matter to deal with. Since Mr. Hays has been at the head of the industry there has been developed a set of moral rules, some of which are mere danger signals about offending limited groups, but many of which bear on this never-ending problem of life, and especially of adolescence. As revised in 1930, the code represents the present conclusions of Mr. Hays on what can be done or tried for. About sex the most important provisions are these: —

Adultery, although sometimes a necessity of the plot, must not be treated with explicitness or sympathy.

The sanctity of marriage shall be upheld, and pictures shall not infer that irregular ('low' is the word used) forms of the relationship are accepted or common.

'Scenes of passion' are not to be introduced when not essential to the plot. This, of course, depends wholly on its interpretation. Robert Louis Stevenson might be somewhat startled to see how essential violent sex scenes are to *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

In this field sheer prejudice must have its rights, as in the ban on sex hygiene and warnings about venereal disease, but we reach the essence of the difficulty in prohibitions of 'excessive and lustful kissing' and 'lustful embraces.' Can anybody accustomed to the pictures be optimistic about the extent to which this prohibition is now carried out? Also, we may ask, can the

absurd over-emphasis be diminished, in the general performances, or shall we rely in the end on the degree to which programmes for children are separated from those frequented by unsorted adults?

VII

Children are to the fore in censorship abroad, and Mr. Hays, on account of the large export of American films, has had many negotiations with foreign countries, which are still alive, though no results have yet been reached. It is agreed that there can be no centralized censorship on morals, since experience shows that standards of what is harmful differ basically in different countries. As the Hays organization represents at least 70 per cent of American production, and American production represents about three quarters of the attendance at films in the whole world, this problem will grow — unless, indeed, the invention of the talking film turns out to be a check on export, as it well may. Among the most active countries in preventing the infliction of Americanization on her citizens by the film route has been France, and she has been especially active on features that have any governmental significance, or bear on international policy. It was almost inevitable that Germany should register an objection to a melodramatic interpretation of the story of Nurse Cavell. The League of Nations has the whole subject before it, and its complexity is indicated by the fact that the topic is before branches of the League organization that are charged with questions political, moral, and economic, sometimes easily separable, sometimes not.

Great Britain has not been slow to consider Asia in this new light. What conception of the white race, its standards and its life, is making its way through India and China as increasing numbers watch the pictured luxury, violence, lubricity, and vacuity? Speaking before the House of Commons in 1927, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald said: 'Only a few months ago, I happened to be wandering up and down a little village in one of the outposts of civilization, and not only an outpost of civilization but an outpost of life. There I came across a cinema. I was in the company of a very noble and dignified member of a foreign race in whose land I was at the time, and when we passed that cinema it was emblazoned with advertisements which ought to have brought the blush of shame to the cheek of the thickest-skinned and most corrupt and abandoned of men; and the actors in that film were white people.'

Two years earlier Stanley Baldwin, also speaking in the House of Commons, had declared: 'I think the time has come when the position of the film industry in this country should be examined, to see if it is not possible, as it is desirable on national grounds, that a large proportion of films exhibited in this country are British, having regard to the enormous power which the film has developed for propaganda purposes, and the danger to which we in this country, and our Empire, subject ourselves if we allow that method of propaganda to be in the hands of foreign countries.'

Mussolini is taking an active interest in the films, and of course in Russia they are entirely dominated by the government; in democracies these short cuts to an objective desired are inconsistent with the conception of real progress.

It was before the Committee on Arts and Letters, in 1928, that John Galsworthy moved a resolution recommending 'action to prevent moving pictures from being used to foster ill will among the nations.' Their record

on the question of peace has much of positive assistance, as in *The Enemy*, *The Man I Killed* (of which the title has been flattened into *Broken Lullaby*), *Journey's End*, *What Price Glory*, *The Big Parade*, and *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Many articles have been written on the moron standards of those at work in Hollywood itself. It is to the credit, presumably, of Will Hays that he is widely disliked in that community. He is disliked because he interferes with the unchecked manufacture of the kind of product that the mechanics of the industry believe can be sold to the largest masses. If by the pressure of minority opinion we are able to avoid political censorship, and to put the lower appetites on something reasonably near to a starvation diet, it will be one more hint that, in the long perspective, democratic methods are best. If on Hays were to be bestowed a degree, it might recount that he has used his gift for business, tact, and organization to make it easier for minorities to accelerate the slow progress of the many.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE QUANTOCKS

BY LLEWELYN POWYS

I

When we were children, no holiday excursion gave us more happiness than a day spent on the Quantocks. These moorland hills, rising northwest from Taunton and stretching almost to the Bristol Channel, were very exciting to us. I suppose their attraction depended largely upon the nature of their scenery, which was utterly different from that of our home. We were used enough to South Somerset, with its clay and mud, — 'bad for the rider, good for the bider,' — whereas these wild Ishmaelitic hills possessed the charm of the unfamiliar.

The other day, after an interval of a quarter of a century, I saw them again. The occasion that impelled me this time was a sad one. I went to visit the grave of a girl who, during the cold weeks of last January, had died at the old fishing village of Watchet and had been buried there. A particular poignancy attended this death. She had left us at the New Year to look for a house in the West Country. She and her husband had found a place that suited them exactly, and were about to return to London to make the final arrangements incident to their new life when, after an illness of only two days, she was dead.[1]

I have been told that the Chinese emphasize a difference between ordinary partings and these other particular partings when, in our ignorance of the crooked ways of fate, we separate

[1] Ann Reid, wife of the novelist, Louis U. Wilkinson, was the author of *We Are the Dead* and *Love Lies Bleeding*. She wrote with great simplicity and delight of feeling, and her spiritual intensity was remarkable. — Author

from those we love forever. It is their rumor also that an approaching death will cast a forward shadow. It certainly seems to me in retrospect that when I last saw her I had had an obscure premonition of what was to happen. She was suffering from a cold, and, lying in the corner of a wide cottage bed, she looked alarmingly fragile. I remember also that there came to me, as I walked back over the downs, certain chance glimpses of her in the past, glimpses that presented themselves as distinctly as pictures. I saw her following the cart ruts that ran beside the standing August corn, her hand shading her eyes. I saw her in the seaweed pool at the bottom of the White Nose; and again I saw her by the fireside gravely quoting to me this lilt she had learned from her mother: —

'The best bed's a feather bed,
The best bed of all.
The next bed is a bed
Made of pea straw.
The pea straw is dirty,
It will dirty all your gown;
But never mind the feather bed,
Lay yourself down.'

Her life had not been a completely happy one. The same intensity that gave so high a quality to her writing made it hard for her to fortify herself against the thwartings and disappointments of the years. Her spirit was as delicate and as vulnerable as her body, with its bones light as the bones of a bird. She always remained a child, and if she stood on highest tiptoe could never measure more than a hogweed in a hedge.

As is so often the case with the very young, the agitations of her soul would communicate themselves directly to her body, so that if you were holding her hand when she was troubled, you would feel it vibrant and trembling like a minnow freshly taken from the net.

II

I set out on my expedition proposing to spend my first night at Crowcombe, a small village which lies at the foot of the Quantocks, and from there, the next day, to walk over the moors to Watchet. I found the village unchanged; the old red brick Court House of the Carew family standing just as I remembered it, and to the right of the church the same steep lane leading on to the hills.

I took a room at the Carew Arms and had tea before a wide old-fashioned fireplace. As I ate my meal of whortleberry jam and Devonshire cream I seemed for the first time fully to appreciate the satisfaction that Hazlitt felt on those rare occasions when he was known to the world by no nearer definition than 'the gentleman in the parlour.' After I had finished, I made up my mind to climb the Quantocks that very evening in order to discover the best route for my walk the following day.

Of all the lanes in the world this Crowcombe lane charms me most. I had never gone up it before in the springtime, and in this tender opening period of the year the mossy track seemed more beautiful even than I had remembered it. There were periwinkles out on the crumbling walls and everywhere primroses. The lane wound upward and upward under the most splendid beech trees. The enormous trunks of these trees, rising with silent might out of the bare ground, their horizontally interlacing branches lifted higher and ever higher, awoke the spirit to the worship of Nature's strength, to the worship of her patient piety. The mute boughs, still winter-bare and yet united into one harmony, were to the eye as organ music to the ear. It seemed that not one gray-white outspreading branch had changed its form since the

days of my childhood, since that dog-day morning when, as a small boy, I had followed my Aunt Dora up the steep path, trying my best with a frond of bracken to beat away the stinging flies that troubled her. I had been impatient then to reach the top of the lane, and on this spring night the same urge was upon me. Not Table Mountain, not Mount Tamalpais, not Kenya, not Mount Carmel, not Vesuvius, not one of them all had stolen the old appeal of the West Country hill.

At last I was on the summit and once more looking with corporeal eye at this prospect, which on so many different occasions, in places so far from Crowcombe, had been present to the inward vision of my mind. It is one of the finest views in England. Under the bright cold sky of that April evening I could see the hills in all their glory, fold beyond fold, combe below combe, falling away to the western ocean. On the farthest horizon it was possible to make out the mountains of Wales, while in the mid-distance, set in the silver sea of the Bristol Channel, was the island of Steep Holmes standing black against the water, black against the parrot-green nursery meadows that slope down to the very shore.

Always as children we had longed to see a red deer. In vain we had searched for one, diligently exploring each grove of stunted oak trees, pushing our way through every patch of bracken that seemed dense or secluded. We had followed the mountain streams from one rocky basin to another, but on no single occasion had we disturbed hind or stag. Now after all these years my luck had changed, for as I walked through the heather stalks blackened with fire I suddenly became aware that two of these animals had risen not fifty yards away. They were so large that almost I could imagine myself back in the highlands of Africa looking at water buck. For a moment they remained motionless, gazing at me with the concentrated attention characteristic of wild life suddenly disturbed by man, as though even in these latter days the appearance of our kind, erect and biped, still had something startling about it, something that demanded a more exact ocular investigation than an ordinary object in nature. Then in an instant they were away over the next ridge, their antlers clear-cut against the sky, moving with a succession of absolutely silent leaps, as animals in a dream, as beasts on a tapestry come miraculously to life.

III

I have often noticed that any particularly favored sight of Nature's more perfect disciplines is apt to remove for a certain time those limitations of perception that use and wont so quickly impose upon us. Without warning, without reason, we find ourselves suddenly able to experience emotions roaming and marginal, to see life with the eye of Merlin! This happened to me now as I rested on a heap of dry heather halfway down the lane, at the very spot where as a boy I had lost my birthday watch among the whortleberries.

Night was already falling. Never had I seen the planet Venus more beautiful, never had I seen her shine with a light more firm and faëry. As I looked at her in her isolated loveliness, the heels of my boots pressing into the soft mould of the familiar earth, and with my senses enmeshed in mystery, suddenly there was the sound of church bells upon the twilight air. It was at that moment as if this Christian sound coming up from the village below belonged really and truly to another world, a world without sorrow or death, a world no longer rude, a world where love was as gentle as mill-stream flowers and as

eternal as light. Up through the naked beech-tree branches came the sound as from a great distance, the fitful cadence of its tintinnabulation borne, now soft, now loud, upon the restless winds of the wood.

All Christmas nights were in the sound and all New Year Eves. It tolled for the passing of the souls of all men and of all women; it chimed for the wedding processions of true lovers who for centuries have slept dreamless far under the roots of red-berried yew trees. Now it sounded dolorous as the stroke of a harbor bell giving warning of danger in the dusk of an autumn evening; now happy as a carillon from the turret of a chantry, when cuckoo-flowers and kingcups are out in the water meadows, and the prince and princess at play in their garden bower.

It was as though these bell clappers were truly ancient mediæval tongues telling of days out of the past; telling of antique cradles, of the enchanted web of flaxen sheets gray with age; telling of churchyards still prosperous and emerald bright, but where the strife of this naughty world has been forever canceled, and where the knight and his lady have been lying in innocence for a period without computation, and where the rook boy elbows the goose girl and the hen wife the swineherd with ugly brown teeth. It was a music out of the past. It told of what might have been and never has been; a music of the very borderland of the willful senses; a music of a paradise serene and blithe, where impassioned phantoms wander free, their minds, their bodies, at peace at last.

IV

When I waked the next morning it was raining. 'You are never going on to the hills to-day,' remarked my hostess as she brought in my breakfast. However, by the time I had reached the top of the lane the day had begun to improve.

Hidden among some trees I came upon a small hut. I knocked on its door. A rough man appeared, and I asked him which of the tracks would bring me to Watchet. He rubbed his sandy gray hair and looked suspiciously at me. He was large-boned and unkempt, and his boots were unlaced. Eventually he gave me the directions I wanted. I stood talking to him. He had lived in his small house all his life. He made a livelihood by fetching away the carcasses of the deer killed by the hounds, and distributing the venison among the farmers and village people. For the performance of this task he had a cart, and a pony that was as hard and tough as himself; and he assured me that knowing the Quantocks as he did, and the habits of the red deer, he scarcely ever failed to be in at the death. He told me that his name was Truggins. What the correct word in the lore of venery would be to describe a man with his duties I do not know.

I now made my way along the high ridge that lies to the west of the hills, and a proud walk it is over this shoulder of the Quantocks. To the left the traveler looks down upon the lowlands that separate the Quantocks from Dunkery Beacon. The ploughed fields showed the red tilth characteristic of Devonshire, and the meadows were small and regular as chessboard squares. I came upon a weather-beaten, weather-bitten thorn tree standing by itself in a place where five grassy tracks met. Judging from the size of its trunk, it must have been of a great age. It was hoar with crisp crinkled lichen, but I noticed that every twig was decorated with living buds. It was difficult to imagine this ancient hawthorn in flower, its twisted besom branches soft with the plenary sweetness of the Mayflower.

What a wild, strange trysting place

this tree would make! Almost certainly it had before now been used for this recurring human need, perhaps by Ruth herself before ever she had come to wander mad and was observed by Wordsworth trifling with her toys in the brown trout streams.

> That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
> Or thrown away; but with a flute
> Her loneliness she cheers:
> This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
> At evening in his homeward walk
> The Quantock woodman hears.
>
> I, too, have passed her on the hills
> Setting her little water-mills
> By spouts and fountains wild —
> Such small machinery as she turned
> Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
> A young and happy Child!

V

I came down from the Quantocks at their northwestern extremity to discover that I still had several miles to walk before reaching Watchet. The hotel where the novelist had died was an old and attractive building. The proprietor and his wife had done all within their power to help her. I looked at these good people with wonder and gratitude, selected as they had been out of all the population of England to cherish the last hours of this girl's life. They showed me her room. It was an ordinary hotel bedroom, but I noticed that between the roofs of the houses across the street a wide space of open sky must have been visible from her pillow. It has always seemed to me no inconsequent matter what our eyes look upon in the hour of death. It was garden birds twittering in the clematis outside her window that made up my mother's last impression of earth life.

I walked to the churchyard on the hill. There was the grave under the farther wall, with the mould still showing raw and with strips of green turf laid unevenly on the mound.

The church of Watchet is dedicated to Saint Decuman. It stands on the summit of a hill midway between Exmoor and the Quantocks. The body of the church is hidden by trees, but its tower is visible from a great distance like a kind of Glastonbury Tor rising by itself. I was happy to know that she who had always been so steadfast a champion of the spiritually oppressed should have her burial plot marked by so brave a sign.

When all has been said, how abject a grave can look! 'We are the dead' — 'We are the dead' — 'We are the dead!' Yet out of the dumb ground there rose no word of resentment, no word of reproach. 'Every day, every hour that you breathe you experience a miracle. You are still free and alive under the blessed light of the sun. Brief as a rainbow your dream also will be. There is no clemency, no reprieve, no escape; no, not for the strongest heart deep mortised in life. "A straw, a hair hath done it."'

DOLLARS, DOCTORS, AND DISEASE

BY WILLIAM TRUFANT FOSTER

I

A SCORE of recent books, all of which might have been entitled *Alice in Blunderland*, have to do with the causes of our industrial depression. Why must so many thousands go hungry? Because we have produced too much corn and wheat, too many apples and potatoes, too much food of all kinds. Why must anybody suffer from cold? Because we have produced far too much coal and fuel oil, too much wool, too many woolen mills, too much clothing. Why must anybody live in shabby houses? Because we have surplus lumber, steel, copper, cement, hardware, and surplus carpenters, plumbers, painters, masons, architects, and contractors. But if we have surplus men and materials in one part of the country and not enough in other parts, why don't we move the surplus to the parts where it is needed? The answer to that question is plainest of all. It is because we have too many railroads, too many ships, too many trucks.

Precisely the same conditions now affect the medical profession. At least one hundred thousand persons in the United States sorely need hospital care to-day, but are not getting it. Why not? The answer seems to be that only two thirds of the beds in our private hospitals are in use, and the hospitals do not know what to do with their surplus capacity.

At least fifty million persons in the United States whose teeth are decaying are not receiving adequate dental care. Why not? That is because this country leads the world in dental science and has tens of thousands of partially unemployed dentists.

Many millions of men, women, and children suffer from other preventable diseases. Why is nothing done about that? The answer is that the science of preventive medicine has made marvelous advances in recent years, and tens of thousands of competent physicians are eager to use their new knowledge and their idle hours to save humanity from needless suffering.

These are mad riddles of the Mad Hatter. The riddles and the answers provide another chapter for *Alice in Blunderland*.

Evidently, the problem of providing adequate medical and dental care for all the people is in one essential the same as the problem of providing adequate food, clothing, shelter, and transportation. The main question is how we are to enable the people to pay for the commodities and services which already we are fully able to provide. Under present conditions, the best medical care is available, where it is available at all, only to the very poor and the very rich. The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care, which has just published its final report, has shown wisdom, therefore, in centring its recommendations about that fundamental

question. Already we have Doctors and Diseases in superabundance, and the supply of Dollars is wholly subject to human control. The main problem is to maintain, in the right channels, a sufficient flow of Dollars to enable the Doctors to deal adequately with the Diseases.

II

Six years ago, seventy-five leading citizens, both inside and outside of the profession of medicine, were consulted concerning this problem. They were virtually unanimous in favoring the organization of a committee to carry on a five-year programme of research in the economic aspects of medical care. A committee of fifty was appointed, representing the fields of private practice, public health, medical institutions, social sciences, and the public.[1] A slight majority of this committee are doctors of medicine or doctors of dental surgery. Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, who is chairman of the committee, has a unique combination of qualifications for that position. As a former medical practitioner, as a former President of the American Medical Association, and as President of Stanford University and Secretary of the Interior, he well represents both the profession and the public.

The committee's research staff, which has been maintained in Washington during the past five years, has produced twenty-six volumes. These volumes, dealing exclusively with facts, have been published by the University of Chicago Press. The value of these studies, regardless of the worth of the recommendations of the committee (to be discussed presently), abundantly justifies the committee's expenditure of its own time and of its budget of seven or eight hundred thousand dollars.

The committee has been unable, however, to carry out certain lines of research, the importance of which has been revealed by its own investigations; and the committee goes out of existence the first of January. It is highly important that some other organization, formed for the purpose of promoting, coördinating, and making useful further research in this field, shall now take up the work. It is also important that some organization should endeavor immediately to promote demonstrations and experiments in various communities, in accordance with the major recommendations of the committee.

III

'Why is the committee chiefly concerned with the *costs* of medical care?' writes one of our critics. 'The trouble is not chiefly economic. Who wants to visit a dentist, anyway? If the workers had more money, they would buy more candy, cosmetics, and chewing gum, but not more dental services. The main reason why they neglect their teeth is not lack of money.'

The researches of the committee do not support this contention. They show, on the contrary, that in the course of a year 90 per cent of the members of families which have incomes of less than $1200 receive no dental care whatever, whereas the figure is only 40 per cent among families with in-

[1] Funds have been furnished generously by the Carnegie Corporation, the Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation, the Milbank Memorial Fund, the New York Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the Russell Sage Foundation, and the Twentieth Century Fund. Grants for special studies have been provided by the Social Science Research Council and the Vermont Commission on Country Life. Further help to the committee in making supplementary studies has been given by the American Medical Association, the American Dental Association, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, the National Bureau of Economic Research, the National Tuberculosis Association, and the United States Public Health Service. — AUTHOR

comes of over $10,000. One member of the committee, Dr. Michael M. Davis, finds that, even in prosperous times, 61 per cent of working-class families in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia spend nothing for dental care. In this study, the causal connection between family incomes and neglect of the teeth is evident. Three fourths of the families with incomes of less than $1200 spend nothing, while only one fourth of the families with incomes of $2500 a year spend nothing. The main trouble is not lack of intelligence, but lack of money.

In further proof of this conclusion, Professor Jessica B. Piexotto cites the expenditures of ninety-six families of faculty members at the University of California. All these families, undoubtedly, are fully aware of the importance of dental care; the struggling young instructors know as much about that as the old professors on full salaries. Yet here again the amount of dental care purchased varies directly with the salaries.

In the United States there is approximately one dentist to every 1800 persons. Since a single dentist, however, cannot render adequate service to more than 30 per cent of this number, about 70 per cent of the needed dental services, even in prosperous times, are not rendered at all. To-day the extent of the neglect is nearer 80 per cent. Certainly, any plan which overcame the economic causes of this neglect would more than double the number of persons who receive adequate dental care, no matter what the effect might be meanwhile on the consumption of candy, cosmetics, and chewing gum.

IV

The reports of the committee show, with an almost incredible range of dependable facts, that failure to use our available knowledge and services causes a vast amount of preventable physical pain and mental anguish, needless deaths, and economic wastes. Present conditions call, not merely for a little improvement here and there, but for far-reaching changes.

The recent progress of the science of medicine has been little short of miraculous. Physicians and other men of science have shown an almost unparalleled professional spirit in making available, for the benefit of mankind, the results of their research in aseptic surgery, anæsthesia, bacteriology, physiology, and radiography. Physicians as a body, especially family doctors, have shown a willingness to risk their lives and to serve suffering mankind without regard to money reward — a record which is scarcely equaled by any business, or even by any other profession. Yet in the distribution of benefits, medicine has made intolerably slow progress.

Under the prevailing form of medical service — private individual practice — more than 80,000,000 persons in the United States either do not receive the care which they need and which could readily be provided, or are heavily burdened by its costs. At the same time, many of the competent practitioners and agencies are underemployed and poorly paid. A barrier, mainly economic, stands between the doctors, dentists, and nurses who are able and eager to serve and the patients who are sorely in need of services. This is the conclusion reached by the committee after five years of research.

About 1,000,000 persons in this country provide medical care and depend upon it for their livelihood. There are nearly 7000 hospitals, with a total capacity of about 1,000,000 beds; 8000 clinics and out-patient departments of hospitals; 60,000 drug stores; and many state, county, and

municipal health departments. These extensive facilities, however, are not distributed according to need: many communities are undersupplied, while many others have a surplus. For example, there is one physician to every 1431 persons in South Carolina, but one to every 484 in California. There are 19 dentists per 1000 of the population in Mississippi, but 101 in Oregon. Only half the counties in the United States have hospitals for general community use. There is also maldistribution as to type. For example, about 45 per cent of the physicians completely or partially limit their practice to a specialty, although the needs of patients might be met if only 18 per cent of the physicians were specialists.

Moreover, even in places where adequate medical care can be purchased, most of the persons in the lowest income groups do not get it. In spite of the large volume of free work done by hospitals, health departments, and individual practitioners, and in spite of the sliding scale of charges, it appears that each year nearly one half of the individuals in the lowest income group receive no professional medical or dental attention of any kind, curative or preventive.

Even more extensive is the failure of the people to benefit by preventive medicine. In any one year, fewer than 7 per cent of the population have a complete or even a partial physical examination. Public health services are also grossly inadequate. Less than 25 cents per capita is now spent for county and rural health work, whereas the committee estimates that adequate services would cost not less than $2.50 per capita.

Then, too, much of the money that is now spent for medical care is spent to poor purpose. Of the $3,647,000,000 that is paid out each year, $125,000,000 is spent for the services of naturopaths, faith healers, and similar groups, and $360,000,000 for patent medicines. In the opinion of the committee, much of the $125,000,000 and virtually all of the $360,000,000 are wasted.

Another difficulty is that the patient does not know what he wants. How *can* he know? And even when he does know, he cannot tell where to find it. He may drift around or be sent around for weeks, from one specialist to another, all the while with decreasing funds and increasing pain.

'Everyone,' says Professor Walton H. Hamilton, a member of the committee, 'has learned the knack of buying bread and shoes and houses. If he wants candy, coffee, or cigars; if his heart yearns for dancing, preaching, or faking, he gets just about what he asks for.' Not so with medical care. The market for that is unique. The demand is for a necessity; failure in supply often means death; yet the patient who buys medical care in the open market runs serious risks. It does not come in standardized packages: there is no simple test of worth which the buyer can apply. As a result, medical care is now bought with little knowledge of its quality — often, too, with little knowledge of its price. The patient commits himself to an unknown course, in which one bill may merely breed others. The price does not behave the way prices behave in textbooks on economics.

Worse still, under the present 'fee-for-service' basis of private practice, the patient may fall into the hands of fee-splitting doctors, and thus be misled when he thinks he is getting honest advice. The objections to fee-splitting are that physicians thereby gain income without regard to their qualifications; patients are diverted by misinformation from the best specialists; the fee is usually exorbitant; men who thus buy

and sell patients often perform unnecessary operations; and the fee-splitting surgeon is surrounded by paid solicitors, all greedy for money profit. The committee declares that fee-splitting 'increases the cost of professional care, degrades the profession, and, in effect, puts the patient in the hands of the highest bidder.'

What every sick person needs, evidently, is a single agency, in one place, freed from every taint of commercialism, which will furnish him all the necessary information.

V

Even in the face of all these facts, however, the committee believes that the *chief* reason why the costs of medical care lie at the root of the problem is that the costs are uneven and unpredictable. The *average* cost per family means nothing as a practical matter. In one group of 9000 white families, the committee found that the collective expenses of 4 per cent of the families were as large as the collective expenses of 80 per cent. Of the low-income families, the expenses of 80 per cent were less than $60 per family per annum, while the expenses of 3 per cent were above $250. These high-expense, low-income families did not find their burdens bearable, merely because the *average* costs of medical care are not excessive for families with *average* incomes.[2]

The budgeting of family income, which has been encouraged of late years and has been facilitated by the use of installment payments, may assist families in planning for expenditures which can be determined in advance. But the unpredictable nature of sickness, and the wide range of professional charges for nominally similar services, render budgeting for medical care on an individual family basis impracticable. On the present fee-for-service basis, it is impossible for 99 per cent of the families to set aside any reasonable sum of money, with positive assurance that no more will be needed for medical care.

Another objection is that medical costs which are too high for many families to pay nevertheless do not guarantee high incomes to most of the practitioners. The total income of physicians in private practice is much less evenly distributed than the income of several comparable professions: actual net incomes are inadequate for large numbers of practitioners and more than adequate for others. For every physician who, in 1929, received a professional net income above $10,000, there were two who received less than $2500. The contrast is especially great, as everybody knows, between the incomes of general practitioners and the incomes of specialists. The committee concludes that no solution to the problem of medical costs can be reached through a reduction in the average of professional incomes.

Another difficulty in providing medical care is that the per capita income, even in prosperous 1929, was less than $700, and the income of half the families was less than $1800. Furthermore, the 123,000,000 human beings who need doctors and dentists and nurses are scattered over 3,000,000 square miles of territory. There are 20,000 persons to the square mile in Manhattan, and only one to the square mile in Nevada. Then, again, 10 per cent of those who need care are Negroes, and of these 23 per cent are illiterate. Still further to complicate the problem is a climate notoriously fickle, and a temperature which ranges from 119 degrees above zero to 45 degrees below

[2] See 'The Cost of Illness,' by Anne Miller Downes, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for October 1927. — AUTHOR

zero. These difficulties are slight, however, compared with the fact that millions still believe in incantations as a cure for smallpox, or in other remedies of the same fascinating nature.

These, then, are some of the conditions which the committee had to take into account in formulating a plan for the satisfactory medical care of all the people and adequate means of payment for all the services. These conditions are the outcome of social evolution; they are not the fault of the medical profession or of any other group; they must, nevertheless, be faced.

The crux of the problem, evidently, is to bring Doctors, Dollars, and Diseases into such helpful and continuous contact with each other that the practice of medicine can keep pace with the science of medicine.

VI

In its final report, the committee lists six essentials by which the value of any proposed plan must be judged: —

1. The plan must safeguard the quality of medical service and preserve the personal relationship between patient and physician.

2. It must provide for the future development of preventive and curative services in such kinds and amounts as will meet the actual needs of all the people, not merely their effective demands.

3. It must provide services on financial terms which the people can and will meet, either through individual or through collective resources.

4. There should be a full application of existing knowledge to the prevention of disease, so that all medical practice will be permeated with the concept of prevention. The programme must include, therefore, not only medical care of the individual and the family, but also a well-organized and adequately supported public-health programme.

5. The basic plan should include provisions for assisting and guiding patients in the selection of competent practitioners and suitable facilities for medical care.

6. Adequate and assured payment must be provided to the individuals and agencies which furnish the care.

Having spent five years in fact-finding, and having agreed upon these six essentials, the committee was forced to recommend, as the only ultimate solution for the great majority of our people, group practice of medicine and group payment of medical services.[3]

The committee recommends that medical service, both preventive and therapeutic, should be furnished largely by organized groups of physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, and other associated personnel. Such groups should be organized — and preferably around a hospital — for rendering complete home, office, and hospital care. The form of organization should encourage the maintenance of high standards and the development or preservation of a personal relation between patient and physician.

The major recommendations envisage groups providing all the needed therapeutic and preventive medical and dental services, except care for tuberculosis, mental disease, or other conditions which have been accepted as governmental responsibilities. Thus, complete groups would contain physicians, — both general practitioners and specialists, — dentists, nurses, pharmacists, medical social workers, and all the needed technicians and assisting personnel.

It is clear that many groups in smaller cities and towns cannot afford the full-time services of specialists

[3] Objections to group practice are stated in 'Medicine and the Middle Class,' by Dr. Wingate M. Johnson, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for March 1931. — AUTHOR

in each branch of medical practice. To obtain the less common specialized services, these groups should affiliate with larger centres, particularly with teaching hospitals and medical schools.

The committee recommends, further, the extension of all basic public-health services, — whether provided by governmental or non-governmental agencies, — so that they will be available to the entire population. Primarily this extension requires increased financial support for official health departments and full-time trained health officers and members of their staffs, whose tenure is dependent wholly upon professional and administrative competence.

The committee also recommends that the costs of medical care be placed on a group-payment basis, through the use of insurance, through the use of taxation, or through the use of both these methods. This is not meant to preclude the continuation of medical service provided on an individual-fee basis for those who prefer the present method. Cash compensation for wage loss due to illness, if and when provided, should be separate and distinct from medical services.

It is unfortunate that the committee, having decided that some form of group payment is absolutely necessary, did not recommend *compulsory* health insurance; for nothing is more certain, in the whole wide range of the committee's field of study, than that *voluntary* health insurance will not meet the needs of those who are in greatest need. It will not reach the unorganized, low-paid workers. It will not solve the problem of satisfactory care for all the people, which is the very problem the committee set out to solve. Already most European countries have abandoned voluntary systems in favor of compulsory systems. Yet only nine members of the committee declared themselves in favor of a compulsory system.

VII

Nine other members of the committee, all doctors of medicine, are so far committed to the present fee-for-service system that they cannot bring themselves to sign even the moderate majority recommendation for the more extensive use, on a voluntary basis, of various methods of group practice and group payment. These nine members have presented a minority report.

The minority report states — what everyone must admit — that there are dangers in the proposed plan, and that the results, at least for some time to come, may be less satisfactory than the majority report leads us to expect. The minority members advocate continuous, complete service for chronic diseases, paid for on a yearly basis; the adoption of insurance methods only when they can be kept under professional control; and a change of emphasis in medical education, with a view to developing general practitioners and improving instruction in preventive medicine. On the other hand, the minority members condemn all schemes devised by laymen to exploit, for their own profit, the medical profession and the public; all 'contract practice' as usually carried on; and all forms of practice which make it difficult or impossible to maintain the personal relationship of physician and patient.

With all this, the majority members of the committee agree. These minority statements would have been incorporated in the majority report if they had been received by the editing committee in time. The differences of opinion, therefore, among the members of the committee do not cover as many points as the minority report seems to indicate.

All the recommendations of the minority members put together, however, promise little progress toward the provision of satisfactory medical care for all the people and satisfactory payment for all the services. The minority members evade the main issue — as, indeed, the other members do who refuse to endorse compulsory insurance or any other adequate plan for group payment. The minority members are essentially *laissez faire* economists. They insist that doctors be left alone to solve, in their own way, the problem which, after centuries of trial, they have been utterly unable to solve. In other fields of human endeavor, there is painful evidence that leaving each individual and each group alone to provide commodities and services in its own way, in pursuit of its own profit, fails to provide all the people with the food, clothing, and shelter which society, in the United States at least, is fully equipped to provide.

We learned this lesson long ago, as far as education is concerned; but the analogy between education and health is like a red rag to a majority of the medical profession. The trouble seems to be that it is a remarkably sound analogy. Certainly human welfare depends on the health as well as the education of all the people. These objectives cannot be attained if each member of society is allowed to be as ignorant and as sick as he pleases, or if each member who wants the help of a teacher and a doctor is obliged to pay for such help, without the aid of any method of group payment.

Education is now provided by group practice and group payment. Measures for achieving the same results in health are advocated by a majority of the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care. The minority report falls short of advocating an adequate plan either for group practice or for group payment. The majority report, it is true, falls short of advocating the use, at present, of adequate tax support or adequate insurance. The majority report does say, however, that 'unless the national income increases so rapidly that many of the families at the lower end of the economic scale are enabled, on a periodic payment basis, to meet such costs, some method of tapping the combined resources of the population must be found.'

This is, in effect, an admission that society must look forward to providing for health on the same basis as education, or else leave the medical profession in its present unfortunate plight. Even the chairman of the minority committee admits that 'a tide of public opinion inimical to the profession is rising which has already become a distinct menace.' For the sake of both the profession and the public, the Dollars should be provided by collective action; the Doctors should be professionally in command; and thus the abundant resources, human and material, which are already at hand should be mobilized for the age-old battle against Disease.

TYPICAL VERMONTERS

BY JAEL KENT

SOMEWHERE, on some little back farm far from our little back farms, in some little Vermont village far from our village, the typical Vermonter is lurking. There must be such a person, for many speak of him; but though I have looked for him long and patiently, I have never found him. He does not live on our street, nor gossip at our post office. He does not drive in to our grange meetings, nor bring his typical Vermont family to our chicken-pie suppers; he does not bid at our auctions.

There is only one quality that could be called 'typical' of the Vermonters I know. That is their extraordinarily irritating way of not conforming to any type. Each of them is an original. Born on the same hills, fed on the same beans, educated in the same schools, they have just one common denominator: they are all rare birds. If you doubt it after meeting the five neighbors whose likenesses I shall sketch for you — come and see the rest of us for yourself.

I

Horace has a farm about six miles out of Gilead Four Corners, on what we call the 'hill road,' though to strangers this might seem a distinction without a difference. The first time I met him was when I went out to his place to see if I could hire him and his boys to do some work on the house I had bought in the village.

Our talk followed the usual devious course — weather, crops, neighbors, and the weather again. After the third or fourth exchange of 'Wal, it's a good hay day, don't you call it?' answered by 'Yes, it's real good weather for haying,' I introduced, as was right and proper, the business at hand. I wanted my roof shingled, and some plastering done, and I wanted a bridge built across the little stream that cut us off from the road. I was quite explicit about the amount of work involved, and the time I figured it would take.

Horace put his hands in his suspenders and spat beneath the fringe of his drooping walrus moustache. He looked round at the hills, then back again at me, out of his shrewd, twinkling little eyes. 'You want we should shingle?' he inquired, as though introducing an entirely new idea. I very definitely wanted just that.

'You want we should plaster?' I did.

'You want we should build a bridge cross stream?' I still did.

He took another look round at the hills and the sky before he spoke again. Finally he said, 'It's a good hay day, don't you call it?'

With what I felt was a ruthless breach of etiquette, I asked Horace a direct question: 'Do you think, Mr. Flint, that you and your boys could undertake the job?'

He studied for a long time before he answered. 'I dunno,' he said at last, 'I dunno but what we kin.'

That was as near to an affirmative

as I ever heard from Horace, and I was surprised and pleased the next morning when he and his three sons appeared at my old house ready for work. 'We cal'late to stayrt on the bridge,' he told me, and went into a huddle with his boys. After a while I heard an axe ringing and came out to investigate. Four or five hundred yards away, at the top of a rise of land, one of Horace's sons was chopping down a stout hemlock. When it had crashed to the earth and the branches had been lopped off, the four of them began to drag it to the edge of the stream, where the water cuts across the front yard of the house.

Halfway to the bank, Horace straightened up and called me.

'Stringer,' he said when I came up. He grinned at me, and speculatively eyed the hemlock, then the stream. So far as one could tell, it was the first time he had thought of comparing them with each other. 'I dunno but what it's 'bout long enough to go cross,' he said to the boys. He put his hands deep into his overall pockets, set his feet wide apart, and measured again with his eye, first the hemlock, then the stream. 'Dunno but what it ain't more'n half long enough,' he added.

Horace and his boys worked for me five or six weeks that summer. Every evening, as they left, I called out, 'You'll be here again to-morrow, won't you?' and Horace always answered, 'Try to.' His tone clearly implied his belief that an unwise Providence would interfere, and indeed it often did.

We became good friends while the shingling and plastering were in progress. Horace liked to joke. He was casual and humorous, and had an easy way with the boys. He never went to church, he worked on Sundays as well as week days, and he never hurried about anything. Easy-going — that is what the village calls him. But, for all that, he did what I asked of him in a workmanlike and efficient manner. He charged me a fair price for it. He never made any promises, but he stuck to his job till it was finished.

And Horace is a good neighbor. After the house was in repair, I lived there alone with my nine-year-old son. One night we had a terrible storm. The thunder crashed, the lightning struck again and again in the woods around us, the rain came down in sheets. The little stream swelled to a torrent, and I expected every minute that Horace's bridge would be carried out. But it held.

In the morning, while I was doing up the breakfast things, I looked out of the kitchen window and there was Horace himself, standing beside the bridge, meditatively poking the stringer with his foot. I went out to ask what had brought him.

'Quite a storm, wa'n't it?' he said, still trying the stringer to make sure it was fast in the softened bank. I agreed.

'Said to the woman last night,' he continued, 'I said I dinno but what you and Johnnie might hev been washed right away. Thought I better come over-'long this mornin' — see if they was suthin' left.'

I told him we were all right, and we talked of this and that. When he was leaving, I thanked him for looking after us so kindly.

'Wal,' he said, in his slow, twinkling way, 'folks is kinda scayrce in these parts. Dunno as we like to lose *many*.'

II

A dangerous-looking character, such as one might find between the covers of an old dime novel, Perley, when he is at home, disturbs the harmony of our quiet street. His lean brown cheeks are

deeply hollowed at the corners of a toothless mouth. His black eyes are impudent in the shadow of his broad-brimmed felt hat. His hoarse voice, croaking profanities, his slouching walk, the aggressive hunch of his shoulders — everything about him is reminiscent of the story-book buccaneer. If you were to accuse him of being, in fact, a pirate, he would be flattered, and would probably reply that he *was* a kind of 'se-mi mawdern' one, thus introducing you to his favorite expression.

The village disapproves of Perley, as it would disapprove of a real pirate if it knew one, and tempers the disapproval with the grudging respect which is its homage to success of whatever kind. Yet Perley and Perley's calling are indigenous to our soil, as piracy is not; indeed, we should not be a proper Vermont village without him. He is our Antique Man.

We have a store, and a post office, and a gasoline station; but we have no charming white cottage with blue-green shutters and a weathered sign giving notice to all comers that genuine antiques may be had within. We have only Perley. His house is dilapidated rather than quaint, and the barn behind it has fallen into a decay more authentic than picturesque. Piled up in the barn and spilling out into the yard are the tables, the ladder-back chairs, the bow-front bureaus, the blanket chests that Perley brought home from the last auction, and from the auction before the last, and from innumerable other auctions that stretch back over the years. Outside, too, are the wood scrapers, and the steel wool (red with rust), and the lard pails full of linseed oil (and rain water), with which Perley plans, some day, to restore these treasures to a pristine and salable beauty.

Until the day when Perley's high resolve matures into action (and the village says that the Day of Judgment will come first) Perley will continue to rove the countryside in search of more chairs and tables and chests. Such lack of thrift and industry in the care of his possessions irritates the village, but that is not the real thorn in the side of his neighbors. It is that Perley is shiftless and shrewd, shiftless and rich.

It was not always so. About nine years ago, the first Early American Ballyhoo reached our backwoods hill and became the instrument of Perley's salvation. Up to that time, when he first learned that the things we call old-fashioned could be turned into cash and adventure, Perley was our ne'er-do-well. In those days he hunted and fished, and occasionally he farmed in a bored and dreamy fashion. He harrowed a little less of his twenty acres than he ploughed, sowed a little less than he harrowed, and harvested nothing. He never married.

In spite of his dreaminess, Perley learns quickly, especially when the lesson is congenial and the rewards tangible. Eight years ago he sold pewter spoons for a quarter apiece, and his patter was unconvincing. But Perley can read, and he got him a book. Reading, and watching the buyers at dealer's auctions in more sophisticated communities, he has picked up a good deal, and he has never been too proud to accept instruction from his customers, counting the humiliation of a poor trade a valuable lesson, and charging his loss to the next purchaser. Now, when he whangs a specimen of Sandwich glass with his bony hand, inclining his head to listen delicately to its ringing; when he tells you that a piece of Bristol is 'goodish,' or that the Hitchcock chairs are 'the best *I* have ever seen' — you almost believe him. From his trips of acquisition he still brings home an occasional stuffed owl,

a sample of Mr. Woolworth's best majolica, and a tatted tidy or two. Nevertheless, and in spite of these lapses, he has learned enough to excite the awe and envy of his neighbors.

Perley's wisdom and shrewdness have become legendary in the village. This is his hard luck, for the villagers will sell him nothing; they would rather split up the family heirlooms for kindling than see Perley profit by them. His mere presence at a local auction is enough to send the prices soaring. Once, before I had been initiated into the mysteries of neighborhood gossip, I showed Perley a table I had bought from our storekeeper, remarking that he had refused to take more than fifty cents for 'the wuthless old thing,' and I advised Perley to look around for treasures at home, instead of seeking them so far afield.

'The derned fool!' Perley replied without malice. 'I offered him five dollars for that table. He said he presumed that if it was wuth five to me it was wuth ten to somebody else, and he would n't sell it.' Neither to Perley nor to the storekeeper was there anything odd in his selling it to me for fifty cents, since it was obvious that I wanted it for use and not for profit.

But the village, though it will not sell to Perley, delights in his prowess as a trader. If you come to Gilead Four Corners in search of bargains, and if by chance Perley is at home, you will be directed to his door. He is really an amiable old cutthroat, in spite of appearances. He will deal fairly with you, and, though his information is sometimes misleading, his prices are modest. But whatever you pay, the village will be certain that you have paid too much — and, secretly, it will expand in pride of Perley.

III

Mrs. Martin is a young woman — about thirty-five, I should think. In a farming community it is rare for a woman to look as young as her years, and it is one of Mrs. Martin's distinctions that she does. She is tall and slender, with a free, graceful carriage. She wears her straight black hair parted in the middle and drawn back smoothly from her fine brow. Her green-gray eyes look out at you in a calm, intelligent gaze from under straight eyebrows. Somebody must give her her clothes. She would never bother to make them, even if she knew how, and she surely lacks the money to buy them. Still, she wears other people's clothes with an air that none of us quite manage in the garments we purchase or make for ourselves. It is an air that matches her gracious manner, her talent for saying the pertinent thing pleasantly.

Mrs. Martin knows a great deal that the rest of us do not know. She can tell you the names of all the birds, and when they come in the spring, and where they nest. She knows what trees and flowers and ferns can be found in the state. An omnivorous reader, she can construe the hardest sentences in Vergil and Cicero. She can solve any crossword puzzle. When we play games at club meetings or church sociables, she wins the prizes.

But there is no use mincing words: Mrs. Martin has the dirtiest house I have ever seen anywhere. It looks dirty from a long way off — dirty windows, dirty lace curtains, litter in the yard. Inside it is topsy-turvy — food, unwashed dishes, refuse all over the kitchen; soiled clothes, unmade beds, disorder all over the parlor. Nor is this all. Any one of us, her neighbors, would know the smell of Mrs.

Martin's house if we got a sniff of it in Jericho.

Out of the filth and squalor of this house have come the seven smartest children who ever went to school on the hill. The oldest is making a brilliant record in college. The youngest, Tillie, started school this year. During her first day at class Tillie burst into loud and stormy weeping. When she was calm enough to answer questions, she said, with the tears of shame at such an exhibition still coursing down her pink cheeks: 'I can't help it. I know too much for this school.'

They are also the seven healthiest children to be met with anywhere. They never sniffle in the winter, never catch a contagious disease, always look as sleek as cats fed on cream. Somehow they manage to step out of that pigsty of a house appearing as crisp as if they had just come from the hands of a German governess.

If this paradox puzzles you Mrs. Martin will resolve the riddle with a characteristically frank statement. 'I hate housework!' she says. 'I was sixteen when I married. If I had tried to do the housework properly, and have my babies and look after them as they grew up, it would have killed me. We don't eat things that require much cooking — milk and potatoes mostly. In the summer we're out all the time, in the woods and fields, the children and I. Sometimes we stay out all night, if we want to. Henry does for himself when he comes home from work. And in the winter the children go to school, and I read and study their lessons with them.'

Mrs. Martin has very little regard for property, being possessed of none and unambitious to burden herself with the care of things. But she has a deep feeling for books. She is fiercely indignant against the librarian in a near-by town where one of her children goes to high school. 'A shiftless, sloppy woman,' she said to me, fondling a dog-eared book with the sympathy that some people reserve for mistreated stray kittens. 'Ruth brought this home from the library, but I would n't let her read it until I had fixed it up some. I always have to clean up the books from that library with an eraser, and I keep some gummed tape for patching them; then I make them new clean paper covers.'

The book in her hand testified to her skill and patience. Behind her, as she talked, I could look through the open door of her house and see the dirt, ugliness, and jumbled disorder from which she manages to escape by the simple but determined gesture of turning her back.

IV

If Horace is not altogether old-fashioned, in our sense of the word, at least he belongs to the old order of things. And Perley, as he himself will tell you, is romantically 'semi-modern.' But Dana is of to-day. Although he is only a few years younger than Perley, although the land he farms came to his family in a pre-Revolutionary grant, although he says 'daown street' and 'caow' and asks visitors if they 'like here,' Dana is no quainter than the Empire State Building.

He is a farmer, and he looks the part — a rather handsome farmer, to be sure, with blue eyes, a wide smile, and an alert expression on his mobile face. Stocky and well-built, there is still something boyishly awkward about his body, something in his walk that suggests chores. Made for the land, he walks on it with power and assurance rather than with grace. If you met him in a drawing-room, you would smell the hayfields and look to see if the barn dirt still clung to his shoes.

Yet Dana would be mentally at home in any drawing-room. He is a ready listener wherever talk is good, a shrewd commentator on affairs. Like his four brothers, he is a college graduate. In Vermont, a child's labor belongs to his parents until his majority. Dana attended college from harvest to spring harrowing; from spring harrowing to harvest he worked on the farm, making up his studies at night. His brothers are products of the same system, but after graduation they left Vermont to win their fortunes in New York. Only Dana remains to till the home acres, wresting from them a modest living for himself, his wife, and his four lovely children.

He is content with farming, for he likes being his own boss. He loves to look out over the blue hills in the evening, to chop alone in his wood lot on early winter days, to sniff the fragrance of sap boiling in the early spring. He is not sentimental about these things, but now and then he mentions them when he writes an article for one of the agricultural journals. For him, these are important elements which go to make farming not merely a means to earn a living, but a way of life.

He has a great curiosity about modern problems. There is nothing in it of the nostalgic curiosity of the adolescent, rebelling against his isolation in the hills. Dana is content to study and observe from a distance, but he is always eager for news from beyond. So he subscribes to the leading magazines, and when he goes to the nearest big town to have his grain ground at the mill he spends his idle hours in the library. Now and then his brothers send him books, and when he can afford it he buys some volume that he has seen provocatively reviewed. Such books are *Red Bread* and *New Russia's Primer*, because he is deeply interested in the Communistic experiment; or *Why We Behave Like Human Beings* and *Education and the Good Life*, because he is deeply concerned about the training of his children.

When he 'looks off,' his vision is hemmed in by the high peaks of Killington and Pico, but he can see that old standards are crumbling, old hopes failing. He will tell you, in his quiet tones, that the capitalistic system belongs to the past, that a new day is at hand. If he cannot look beyond the mountains, he can see farther than his neighbors, with their milk problem and their sheds full of rotting potatoes that they cannot sell. He, too, suffers from a dwindling cream check, but it is not this personal suffering that is his chief concern. 'It is all a part,' he says, 'of the general breakdown of our institutions. And the change is coming, sooner than I thought to see it come.'

When we have our first agricultural commune at the Four Corners, Dana will be a fine leader — our interpreter of the new order.

V

If you were to sit in the comb-backed Windsor that faces my parlor window and look out into our wide street, the chances are that you would see Miss Callie Pember. On a muddy day she picks her way between the puddles as delicately as if her high rubber boots were silver dancing slippers. If the day is fair, and the road firm and clean, she skims over it with long, flat-footed strides, clutching a net carryall that is almost as tall as herself.

But no matter about the weather. If once you clapped your eyes on her, you would be certain to exclaim that I wickedly deceived you in the opening paragraphs of this article, for Miss Callie Pember is the living embodiment of the idea you have always held of the

New England spinster. If you concede any virtue at all in my contention that nature has peopled these hills with individual characters, you would point to her as the exception that proves the rule, and put her down as our one typical Vermonter.

Is it not typical of her, in the first place, to be a spinster? If Miss Callie ever had a romance, I have not heard of it. It must have been a very nice romance, for it took nothing from the fresh innocence of her mind and her emotions. At seventy, she is not an old lady; she is, rather, a very proper virgin of long ago, exquisitely preserved. In the shy deference of her presence, you meet again the little girl with the sampler, coming bashfully out of her corner, mindful of her manners, to greet her mother's guests.

Of course it was her mother who was responsible for Miss Callie's spinsterhood — that mother who, grimly determined to live for a hundred years, did through a dominating will hang on for ninety-nine. It was this same mother who warned Miss Callie to be careful not to muddy her rubber boots, and taught her to skim over the ground, hurrying from store or post office so that she might get back home as quickly as possible.

Miss Callie Pember has mousy gray hair, drawn taut from her high forehead and twisted in back into what she calls 'a pug.' Her skin is the color of an old stoneware pie plate; much honest scrubbing has shrunken it tight across her high cheek bones, but not too tight for it to be cracked with many fine lines, like the old plate. She is always dressed in a long black alpaca that hangs in straight box pleats from a small square yoke, and under it she wears black woolen tights, which bulge a little over the tops of her high lace boots. She is an immaculate housekeeper, and a beautiful gardener. Her greatest prides are her white hardwood kitchen floor, her steamed brown bread, and her gladioli.

She is so very true to type in every particular that I hesitate to shatter the illusion which sight of her always creates in the mind of strangers by adding the one detail which sets her apart from her neighbors — from Horace, Perley, Mrs. Martin, and Dana. A capricious Fate ordained that Miss Callie Pember should be born in India, be educated in Paris, and for twenty years teach needlework and the Christian Gospel to the natives of Dutch Guiana. It was only ten years ago that Miss Callie came to live in Gilead Four Corners, where she so gracefully fulfills her destiny of a typical Vermonter.

VERMONT FARM

And all the love that there ever was
Between Granville Hill and the Valley of Flood
Is burned out now and gone and dead.
And the valley road is lost in weeds
And the cellar holes are caving in.

The same old brook runs across this road
Though its gully is choked with logs;
Occasional young stock nibble the grass
On Granville Hill that looks across
The ruined vale to the wooded peaks.
And so the slope has a cozy air,
Inviting to lie on in spite of the weeds
And dream of New England of former days.

Nobody drives on the narrow road,
Nothing alive but occasional flies
Mars the quiet of this old place.
It is desolate, ghastly, forbidding, forlorn,
And yet it is dear as it always was;
And private and intimate; precious as well.

The sacred land! The beloved hills!
The soil to return to — be buried in.

Robert W. New

THE LIAR

BY JOSEPHINE E. ROBERTS

I

Miss Bevins, the Girls' Worker, had told them they must not come to the Settlement House in the evening. They were too young to go home alone after dark, she had said. How could she know then that the Gabloinskas spent all their evenings on the streets of the city? Had she been so informed, she might have considered the Settlement House a far better place to spend time than the street-car station or the bowling alley or even the foul-smelling shack which they ironically called home. But these things she did not know; so she was firm in her insistence that they stay away from evening functions. Instead she urged them to come to Girl Scout meeting, because she recognized their need. It was not the filthy faded rags covering their lank bodies that convinced her; it was rather their barren-eyed lack of expression which experience had taught her is the sign of a starved spirit.

And they did come — Leotta with her broad smile that never faded, and Sophie with her arm up over her face. They were so nearly the same size that no one could have guessed which was twelve and which thirteen. They looked enough alike to be twins, but Sophie had the better features. Under a faded bush of unkempt hair she had a face that was almost beautiful, if one could forget the lustreless eyes. But a childish habit of shyness made her keep one arm across her face while she twisted her body from side to side in a way that was comical to see in a long-legged girl of twelve. On the other hand Leotta, without seeming bold, was far from timid. She could talk for monotonous hours without saying anything. She stood now, smiling expectantly, for she had thrust a half-dead carnation into Miss Bevins's hand.

'Why — thank you,' said the surprised Miss Bevins. 'Wherever did you get this?' she asked, trying not to appear too curious.

'Der was a funeral.' To Leotta this explanation seemed complete.

'Someone in your family?' Miss Bevins was prepared to be sympathetic.

Sophie, behind her arm, became impatient with such density of understanding. 'No, on de porch dey put dem,' she said.

'Oh — oh.' Miss Bevins laid aside the flower, sat down very deliberately, and did her duty by the Gabloinskas in the matter of stealing funeral flowers. Neither girl spoke. No impression seemed to be made. When asked to say they would do no such thing again, Leotta promised glibly, but Sophie hid her face.

II

Scout meeting was a revelation to the Gabloinskas. Immoderate surprise and unbelief took possession of their features. They played the games as in a

dream. In patrols they looked from one girl to another in bewilderment. When it came to learning Scout laws, they said they did not want to 'learn notin'' and went home before the end of the hour.

The next meeting was to be held at the cabin out in the country. Miss Bevins told the Gabloinskas they need not bring any food. She wanted to have them come. She was full of faith that association with her other splendid girls would teach them standards they had never known.

They came, Leotta with some green onions from the garden, Sophie empty-handed. All day Miss Bevins was nearly distracted with the Gabloinskas. They hung upon her arms wherever she moved, and shouted silly remarks to one another. The other girls were growing impatient. Everyone was glad when evening came and the cars arrived to take most of the girls back to town. A few were to remain for the night, and the Gabloinskas begged to stay. Miss Bevins said 'No' very firmly.

They had scarcely gone when one of the girls missed a dime she had laid on the table. No one had seen it. But Miss Bevins knew that the Gabloinskas had been last in the cabin, and she pursed her lips. The next morning several girls had no fruit for breakfast. Oranges and bananas were generally missing. Miss Bevins remembered having asked the Gabloinskas yesterday where they had got their bananas, and Sophie had said that Alice gave them the fruit.

Miss Bevins took herself to task. She must protect her other girls, all of whom she could trust implicitly, from perhaps more serious losses. She must be firm with the Gabloinskas next time she saw them. And she was. They came in, as they frequently did, off the street, and she was round with them. She tried to tell them how wrong it is to steal, and she ended by telling them that they must not come again unless they intended to learn all a Girl Scout should know and unless they could be trusted like the other girls. They made no comments, but Sophie kept her face hidden.

A little later Leotta said, 'Some person stoled our dog. We could n't find him er notin'. Dat's bad, ain't it, Miss Bevins, to steal our dog?'

'Say "nothing,"' said Miss Bevins.

'Noting.'

'That's better. Now always try to say "nothing."'

'I don' like to. Notin' is better. I say notin'.'

Miss Bevins wondered. Was improvement possible? These girls, with their seven younger brothers and sisters raised like rats on the city streets, had already grown too old, perhaps, to be changed. Miss Bevins was not easily discouraged, but it was spring and she was tired.

At the next few meetings some strange things happened. Leotta brought a penny to Miss Bevins. 'I found dis in de hall,' she said. Miss Bevins showed her pleasure. Again and again Leotta brought handkerchiefs, purses, and other small articles forgotten by the Scouts. Miss Bevins felt encouraged.

Then one day an imported scarf disappeared, and its owner felt sure that Leotta had taken it. Miss Bevins, though incredulous, talked to Leotta and insisted that the scarf be returned. And it was, the very next day. Leotta seemed to expect praise instead of the reproof she received. She left the room crestfallen.

Another day, after the Gabloinskas had been in her office, Miss Bevins missed a dollar bill from her purse. Much questioning brought no confession. Leotta denied and denied. Sophie

hid her face in her hands and refused to talk. When urged too far, she cried. Miss Bevins looked Leotta straight in the eyes and asked her again, for, after all, it was Leotta who had taken the scarf.

Leotta said, 'I hain't took notin' from nobody.'

Miss Bevins was puzzled. What was she to do with such impossible children? Strangely enough, they had taken her at her word about the Scout work, and in a remarkably short time they had passed the requirements. To be sure, Leotta had confided to her that she made Sophie learn the laws. She had kept her awake at night by pinching her until she could say them!

III

Camp time was drawing near. There was less money for scholarships than usual, because the depression was being felt. The money would have to be used judiciously. What about the Gabloinskas? Goodness knows they needed camp — the food, the discipline, the associations, everything. Miss Bevins doled out the scholarships to deserving girls until there was but one left. What about the Gabloinskas? After long thought, she decided. She talked to them both, told them she had one scholarship to give and that she was going to give it to Sophie. For the first time Leotta's smile faded. She looked dizzy for just an instant. Then she smiled again. Miss Bevins explained that she dare not send to camp a person she could not trust. It would not be fair to the other girls.

A week later she got together some respectable-looking clothes for both girls, but there were camp clothes for Sophie. Miss Bevins and Leotta waved good-bye to the car that carried Sophie to camp.

Every few days Leotta would come into the office to chat, about how many chickens the rats had caught, or her latest fighting adventure, or the accident she had seen. Gradually she learned to avoid the subjects about which Miss Bevins scowled. One day she called her father a liar. Miss Bevins explained that liar is a bad name to call anyone. 'A liar,' she said, 'is a bad person. To lie is as bad as to steal.'

'Bad as steal?' Leotta looked surprised.

'Yes, as bad as stealing.' And Miss Bevins turned again to the work on her desk.

When one day Miss Bevins happened to say that she was going away for the summer and would not be at the Settlement House for several months, she was amazed to see sudden tears in Leotta's eyes.

'You won't miss me long,' she said heartlessly. When Leotta left the room that day, she squeezed Miss Bevins's hand and covered it with wet kisses.

Miss Bevins was at summer school when she received a letter addressed in a peculiar scrawl. It said: —

Der Miss Bevis I rote to tell you. I am a lier. I not nowed it was bad as steal. Sophie she took Scarf an doller an lots of tings. she wout not give me doller for you. I was sad now. I not want be bad as steal. I want be good for you. dis nise paper Sophie she take it at camp an dis pensel. She have good time. I love you I love you I love you Leotta.

Miss Bevins's fellow students noticed that she shut herself in her room that day and missed her classes and kept her door closed for a long time.

1933

The Government's Key to Economic Recovery

BY DAVID FRIDAY

I

THE battle against business depression will be waged, during 1933, in the field of public finance. For three years now we have been asking ourselves whether the turn of the depression was at hand. The end of each year has found us in the midst of new difficulties and uncertainties. In 1930 we were overwhelmed by an avalanche of bank failures. During the last two months of the year, the number of suspensions and the amount of deposits involved were entirely unprecedented. At the close of 1931 we were in the midst of the fight to maintain the gold standard in America. We had won the first battle, and hoped that the contest was over: but it proved only a lull. In the late spring of 1932 the gold standard had to be defended all over again.

This second threat to the gold standard could have been avoided if the federal budget at Washington had been balanced promptly and resolutely in March of that year. But it was not balanced; and for some months there was growing doubt whether a satisfactory state of the public finances would be accomplished before Congress adjourned. In Europe the doubt about our budget was much more pronounced than with us. The people there had had experience of the bitterest sort with parliaments during times of financial stress. It had been their observation that parliaments never did balance budgets in times of great depression. The task could only be successfully carried through by someone who was granted, or who assumed, dictatorial powers. The antics of our Congress from March to May seemed, to the Frenchman, to run according to exactly the same pattern which French parliamentary history had followed during the spring of 1926, when the franc fell to two cents before its decline was finally arrested.

All this brought on a renewed withdrawal of gold on the part of France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. No nation which had withdrawable funds could be expected to leave them in a country whose parliament was conducting itself as our Congress was doing. It was of no avail to tell the Frenchman that the credit of the United States was good, and that its currency was sound. His reply was that that was exactly what he had heard about every country in Europe which had later been forced to abandon the gold standard, including his own. A renegade and irresponsible parliament could ruin any currency, and the credit of any country.

Before the most dangerous proposals for spending money had been defeated, and new tax measures had been passed which would bring the budget nearer

balancing, the country had slipped into a phase of the depression which was lower than any which it had reached before. Industrial production, according to the index of the Federal Reserve Board, had still stood at 69 per cent of the 1923–25 level in February. It fell off to 58 by midsummer. Factory pay rolls declined from 54 to 40. At that point they were only a little more than one third of what they had been in 1929. The security market, for both stocks and bonds, suffered declines which it is not necessary to describe here. The American business community has only too vivid a recollection of that debacle.

There can be no doubt that this worst and final phase of the depression was directly occasioned by the legislative action of these months. One thing was saved out of the wreck: that was the gold standard. When Europe had taken home all her balances, we still had almost one billion dollars of gold which would have been free and available for export if it had been necessary to send it out. The predictions of the European speculators and of some of our own people that we should be off the gold standard before autumn were proved groundless. Never, during all this period, had we come anywhere near being driven off the gold basis, all statements of officials to the contrary notwithstanding. The only things that could have driven us off the gold standard would have been an actual hoarding of the yellow metal by our own people, or an export of capital in large volume, such as Germany and France experienced in recent years. There was some hoarding of gold; and this would doubtless have gone further if the conditions which prevailed in May had continued several months longer. But tax legislation and the adjournment of Congress came in time to forestall this calamity.

The reaction from the hysteria of those months, and the constructive steps taken to settle the reparations question at Lausanne, brought a reversal — first in the security markets, and then, during September and October, in industrial production and trade. But as the year ends we have not yet gotten back to the levels of last February.

II

The decline in prices, wages, dividends, and business activity which accompanied the events of last spring has created a new situation which is inimical to the continuance of business revival, unless it is swiftly remedied. It has thrown the public finances, especially of state and local governments, into serious disorder. Even the federal budget has been affected by the economic consequences of the events of those months. The new taxes are yielding far less than was expected. Unless something is done to remedy this situation, the credit of the United States Government will suffer in coming months.

In the state and local governments these developments have resulted in a serious increase in tax delinquencies. The backbone of their tax system is still the general property tax. As the situation continued to grow worse, people simply refused to pay their taxes. In some states these delinquencies amount to one third of all the taxes levied upon property. The tax rate on property had been growing steadily during the last two decades. With the decline in values and assessments, which has come during the last two years, the rate shot up rapidly. The result is a breakdown of the property tax. It has broken down because it can no longer be made to yield the revenues needed to cover current expenditures.

The result of these developments has been an impairment of confidence in the credit of all governmental units, from the federal down to the school

district. No business revival can be sustained as long as such a condition of affairs exists. In every time of recovery, there must be some safe point of anchorage in the financial world where the private investor and financial institutions can employ their funds. It is only in this manner that savings become purchasing power in the hands of those who will use them to buy goods and commodities. Only once in the history of this country has there been a business revival which did not start with an upturn in the bond market. This exception was in 1915, when European war orders speeded up the wheels of industry. It is the use of bank credit and of personal savings that furnishes the starter for business when it is stalled on the dead centre of depression.

To-day, there is an abundance of funds in the country available for investment. It consists of potential bank credit which the banks themselves would normally use for the purchase of bonds; and of hoarded money which is earning its owners nothing. The sums involved in both categories are large.

The member banks of the Federal Reserve system alone have excess deposits lying idle at the twelve reserve banks amounting to five hundred million dollars. This money pays them no interest and earns them nothing. Now bankers operate for profit, and they naturally want to employ these funds in the purchase of sound bonds. The technique of the credit operation involved in the purchase of securities by banks is such that these excess reserves would sustain at least four billion dollars of such purchases. This would put funds at the disposal of the previous owner of the bonds, or of the government which issued them, if they were new.

But banks will not buy municipal bonds of cities whose budgets show deficits, and 30 per cent of whose taxes on property are delinquent. They are even hesitant about buying long-term bonds of the United States Government. Instead, they purchase notes which have only a few months to run, even though these yield them rates as low as one per cent or less. These institutions have no doubt of the ultimate soundness of the credit of the United States, but the action of Congress in the spring of 1932 is still fresh in their minds. They are still in doubt whether Congress will take definite and firm action in enacting the taxes needed to balance the budget, in eschewing bonus legislation, and in cutting governmental expenditures. As long as the financial community is in doubt on these matters, the future of bond prices will be uncertain enough to prevent the banks from buying. This situation will continue until Congress manifests a firm determination to reform the budget in drastic fashion.

The individual investor is in exactly the same frame of mind. The amount of hoarded currency tucked away in safety deposit boxes and in other less secure hiding places still amounts to a billion and a half dollars. The money in circulation, as that term is used by the Treasury, is two billion dollars more than one would expect it to be in this time of depressed trade. It is practically a billion dollars more than it was at the peak of business activity in 1929. The difficulty is that a great part of this currency is not being used as a medium of exchange for the purchase of goods and securities. It lies in hiding. If even half of the hoarded money were brought forth and used for the purchase of federal, state, and municipal bonds, it would stimulate an active bond market with rising prices. Such an investment market will never come to life as long as the present state of our public finances persists. The

anti-hoarding campaign, inaugurated in the spring of 1932, made a fair start. But it came to an abrupt end the moment Congress staged its revolt against the tax programme of its leaders.

So the purchasing power of our people and of our banks lies idle. This money is barren, both for its owner and for the social structure in which it might be functioning as effective demand. Our bank credit has shrunk by thirteen billion dollars during the last three years, and by ten billions within the last year and a half. It is capable of an expansion which could revive both investment and industrial activity. The gold imports which have flowed back into this country in the last six months have created a great hoard of excess reserves, but they lie inert and useless.

III

The bonds of governments have for the foundation of their credit the taxing power. When it is exercised intelligently and honestly, it makes of these securities investments of the first rank. But taxing power is of no avail for the support of credit unless it is used, and unless expenditures are kept within the limits of taxes which it is possible to collect. The restoration of confidence in government credit on the part of investors, both individual and institutional, is the fulcrum of the situation. If the coming months bring about the establishment of a sound budget, we shall find ourselves advanced a long distance on the way toward normal business by the end of 1933.

This revision of taxes and expenditures will not be accomplished without a great deal of noise and fury. The taxes, if they are to be productive, cannot be levied merely on large incomes. These have shrunk too seriously to yield the revenue needed. They operate wonderfully well in times of prosperity, but they dry up in times of dividend reductions and falling security prices. The new taxes must have a broad base, resting upon the expenditures of the great mass of the people. They must be taxes, too, which we shall pay as we go, so that they cannot become delinquent. There will be bitter complaints, on grounds of social injustice, against any tax which hits everyone. But these are emergency taxes. If they restore prosperity, they will be a cheap price to pay.

The cuts in appropriations will bring even more vociferous complaints, for they must be deep and drastic. When once our state and local governments face the question of reducing outlays sufficiently to enable the system of property taxes to function once more, they will be staggered by the reductions which must be made. In the abstract, people believe in economy. But a cut in salaries of 25 to 35 per cent from the levels of 1929 for all public officials, including public-school teachers and Civil Service employees at Washington, will be considered harsh and inhuman. Yet cuts which must be made to restore public credit are of this order of magnitude.

To many it will seem that such a cut in expenditures, especially for personal services, will destroy the purchasing power of these employees and thereby still further decrease the demand for the products of industry. But it will not reduce general purchasing power. It will only leave it in the hands of the taxpayer instead of transferring it to the government employee. The important thing which it will do for purchasing power is to release the money now being hoarded, and to call into being and make active the potential credit which is locked up in the excess reserves of our banks.

The tax situation has become so serious in our local communities that they will make these readjustments, drastic though they may be. Many of them have already made a large part of these reductions, and are rapidly on the way to placing their financial houses in order. The new Congress which will come to Washington during 1933 brings with it a fresh memory of the sacrifices which people have been making back home. If the present Congress does not revise the finances and bring them into order in its short session, the next one certainly will.

IV

Fortunately, those general economic readjustments which are the necessary conditions of business revival have, for the most part, already been made. These are, first of all, a downward revision of prices. First raw materials fall; then finished products at wholesale; and finally, commodities at retail. All this has been accomplished with a vengeance. Raw materials as a group have fallen by almost one half. Those which enjoyed the protection of price-maintenance pools — such as copper, rubber, sugar, silk, and others — are down even more. In the fields of finished products, at wholesale and at retail, commodities are cheap. Wages have been reduced; and overhead expenses have been curtailed in a manner that would have been considered utterly impossible even two years ago. The efficiency of both labor and management has been increased.

As a result of these adjustments, the cost of production per unit of output has been cut so greatly that producers can make a profit even at low prices, if only they can increase their volume. If confidence is restored in public credit, the volume of output should increase by 30 per cent during the year. This would still leave it a good distance below the peak of 1929, — or even below normal, — but, with the reduced cost and the improvement in management, it would give respectable profits to a large number of businesses which are not able to earn anything to-day.

One of the unqualifiedly favorable elements in the situation at the beginning of 1933 is a marked change in the gold situation. For years now we have heard constant complaint over the scarcity of gold. It has been commonly said, by those who were conversant with the gold situation, that the world produced about four hundred million dollars' worth of gold annually. Of this, roughly one half was absorbed by the demand of the arts and by imports into India for purposes of hoarding. This left two hundred million available for monetary uses. This amount was considered insufficient to sustain prices and the necessary volume of credit.

But the last two years present quite a different picture. Gold production has been steadily rising, until in 1932 it exceeded $460,000,000. This is almost equal to the highest production ever reached. The employment of new gold in the arts has fallen to practically nothing during the past year. Even in 1931 it was small as compared with any previous year. In consequence, the last two years have made available for monetary uses about $850,000,000. In addition, India has not been a buyer of gold during these years. By the autumn of 1932 she had exported over $250,000,000 from private gold holdings, and the yellow metal is still coming out of that country. When this is added to the new production which was not absorbed in the arts, it gives a total for the two years of $1,100,000,000, or more than half a billion annually, available for monetary uses. Some of this is for the

moment being hoarded by private banks and individuals, so that it does not yet appear in the reserves of central banks. But it is beginning to flow out of these hoards, and will, during the course of 1933, be added to these central reserves.

There is every prospect now of a record-breaking production of new gold during 1933. What confronts us, then, is an abundance of gold and not a scarcity. This is certain to make credit easy and interest rates low in any country where confidence is maintained. Such a condition will stimulate business revival. The year 1933 should lay the foundations for a great refunding of the short-time government loans which have been issued during this business depression, into long-term government bonds at low interest rates. It should also witness the initiation of an active and rising bond market.

This new situation with respect to gold will have an important bearing on the future of commodity prices. Gold has been made scarce during the last three years by the abnormal demand of those governments which accumulated it because it was the one commodity whose value was stable in a highly uncertain world. This has served to press down commodity prices. Much of that gold will be released again when it is no longer needed as a 'storer of value.' Together with the new gold which is coming into monetary uses, it will make gold abundant; and will raise commodity prices. We may not see much increase in 1933, but we shall certainly see the beginning of that development, if we conduct our affairs with wisdom.

There are a horde of other less important problems which will occupy our attention during the year. Foremost of these is the question of inter-allied debts. No one yet knows what ingenious scheme will be devised for the final solution of that problem, but that some plan will be evolved before the end of 1933 which will put this question at rest seems more than likely. In fact, it is probably of much less importance for American prosperity than we are prone to think at this moment when the question is so prominently before us. One thing is certain. We enjoyed great prosperity during a long period of years when we received nothing whatever by way of debt payments, and we can enjoy prosperity again, no matter how small may be the payments ultimately agreed upon.

THE MIDST OF LIFE. I

BY MINA CURTISS

June first

'I MUST write letters,' I said, in excusing myself from the company after lunch. But now that I am at my desk, looking through the pack addressed 'Mrs. John T. Sherburn,' — one from South Africa, two from London, two from New York, one from California, — I think: 'The only letter I can answer is n't here, and never will be — never as long as Jack stays dead.'

Dead! Not all the times I've spoken that syllable in the last four years have helped to clarify its meaning. Why, after all, should it be a barrier between us? Why should n't I write to you, dead as well as alive? Why, indeed? Now that I have thought of it, it seems so easy. Of course I shall write to you — every day. I shall tell you everything, everything you would want to know.

But, have no fear that I shall intrude upon your deadness, burden you down with the trivialities of this world. Whatever I may not know about death, this much I do know — that it is a state in which the immediate and timely are as insignificant as the invisible substance carried along in the current of a stream. Never shall I try to interest you in accounts of last night's dinner conversation, in the politics or economics of the hour, nor in my finances or those of our friends. Of the eternal verities I shall write you, as they persist in their day-to-day accent, to remind you in your other world of the simple happiness of this one, its casualness and its excitement.

Already it seems natural to be writing to you, curious only that I should have delayed so long. The reason is clear. I never really believed you were dead until a few moments ago when the mere fact of there being no letter from you, who wrote me every day we were apart, forced through into my heart, for the first time, the knowledge with which my mind has so long been struggling. Always I believed you would come back in one way or another.

At first, I fancied you were in the next room, that accidentally you had left just before I entered. Then I used to expect to meet you on the street. Once, had there been a knife at hand, I should have stabbed a man through the heart — a man I did n't know, who did n't even look like you. It was the first time I walked in the street after you were dead. In the crowd of passing people my eye somehow lighted on this man's face. Its very insignificance attracted me. He became the symbol of the whole living human race, as indifferent to your death as to their own lives; else why would n't they have saved you? A spark of insanity lit up my mind. 'An eye for an eye,' I thought. 'If I could kill that man, that particular unknown man with the package under his arm, Jack would n't be the only person dead, and I could die, too.'

Another time, Alice and I were in a

candy shop, when a man, with your walk, your build, your coloring, your kind of clothes, even the pattern of your overcoat, came in to order a box of chocolates. I should have spoken to him at once had not his face worn a tired, disappointed look, so different from your eagerness and animation.

'That's Jack come back,' I said. 'Death's made him tired. He does n't know me, but I must speak to him right away.'

'It looks a little like Jack,' Alice said, 'but he would always know you. Don't stare so hard at that man, my dear.'

Had I found even a trace of you in any of all the men's faces into which I have stared, there would be very few men but you in the world. For a year or so I fancied myself in love with a man because something in the timbre of his voice, the gesture of his hand, reminded me of you. But timbre and gesture are no touchstone to mind and heart. It was you I loved, not him, and now that, suddenly, I know you are dead, my freedom to love you, yourself, and not some image, is restored.

June second

To-day I must write you about Josephine. She is undoubtedly the first creature you would encounter if you came back, walking across the lawn toward the terrace, as I always think of you returning, sometime in that clear and silent hour between tea and dinner. Before I should have a chance to greet you, much less to explain her presence, you would find a small, white, mongrel-looking terrier rushing out to meet you, leaping up and down with glee at the sight of you, tearing your socks in the eagerness of her embrace, and then, rebuffed, rolling abjectly over on her back at your feet, as if to say, 'Master, you may tread on me.'

'Jinny,' you would say, 'what is this ridiculous animal? Where did she come from, and why is she here? You know it's bad business to have dogs that are n't pure-bred. What's her name? How does Hedda like her?'

By the time I should have told you that she was given to me as a Sealyham, you would have discovered her charm. She would be sitting on your lap, adoring you in wide-eyed admiration. 'Here is a bitch who immediately recognizes her master,' you would think, but it would n't be true. Her technique with every man who comes here is as unvarying as it is successful. When no lap is available, she curls up on the four-legged Victorian stool with the red fringe around it, looking expectant every time the door opens, as though Sir Edwin Landseer were late for an appointment with his favorite model. Were she a woman, she would cuddle and talk baby talk, but she is a self-respecting little bitch. Rebuffed by one, she approaches the next person; rebuffed by all, she goes to sleep, silent and in no one's way. And finally she smiles — a broad, ridiculous grin. Each time I have decided to give her away, as the crucial moment approached she has come rushing up to me wherever I might be, and bared her teeth in so amusing and gay a threat that I have become accustomed to regard as an admission of defeat the words, 'Smi-i-ile, Josephine.'

What Hedda would say is another matter. I don't know, you see, for she's dead, too — a year ago last April. She was only twelve, but worn out, I'm afraid, by the vicissitudes and excitements of life. I could n't admit to anyone else that at first I missed her more than any human being except you. But she never seemed to me like a dog at all; rather like the only other person in whose life you were the centrifugal force. And she possessed the

added advantage of having been raised by you from infancy. At first she missed you quite intolerably enough for both of us. For months she never stopped searching for you — from the moment she rushed out to the motor when I came home; she escorted me into the house, only to return to look inside the car for you. From cellar to attic, from room to room, her tail between her legs, she would go, never finding you, but always willing to give me her paw, to let me cry into her soft ruff. After a few months she learned what it has taken me years to believe, that no amount of searching or loving could bring you back. She accepted me as your substitute, and only once with reproach. One wet day I came into the house wearing your raincoat. As usual, she rushed to meet me, but at the first sniff of your coat she let out a howl of grief and ran and hid in the cellar.

Soon after that I found country winters too solitary, so Hedda and I moved to New York. The change in her nature would have astonished you. From Hedda Gabler, the fierce old shepherd bitch, rude to strangers, a sly tyrant over other dogs, she developed into a distinguished dowager, a tactful duenna, somehow or other dubbed Mrs. Higginbotham. She shared the seat with me in taxicabs; she walked with me on Exterior Street, where the traffic did n't jar her nerves; she became a familiar in the pleasantest restaurants, and occasionally even attended an evening party, where she would honor one or two of the more attractive gentlemen by offering her elegant and slender paw. The reaction from one of these parties may have caused her too early death, and I can't but feel it was a good one.

The day after a party a very charming but shy young woman came to tea.

'Do you know a Mrs. Higginbotham?' she asked me in the course of the conversation.

'Why?' I said.

'Well, I wondered what she looked like. Last night at the party, I heard a man's voice saying in the most impassioned tone,— you know the way you always dream about being spoken to,— "Oh, Mrs. Higginbotham, I think you are so beautiful." They were behind me, and I could n't see her. Do you know her?'

'There,' I pointed, 'is Mrs. Higginbotham.' She lay in an ecstasy of vanity, her beautiful legs crossed, her cream-colored ruff as upstanding as Queen Elizabeth's.

How indulgent is eternity! Time, in this life, would deny a wife the luxury of spending an afternoon writing to her husband about dogs. But without time there is no ban on either sense or nonsense. I dare say, only without time are the two distinguishable.

June twelfth

My head is full of things to tell you, but I have a curious reluctance to put them on paper, as though, by the mere process of transforming thoughts into written words, I should be forever deprived of the poignant happiness I have felt since I realized I could again write to you. So if my words are sometimes stilted, you must be patient with me until I become accustomed to this luxury.

This afternoon, coming back from town weary, I wandered down to the woods to be revived by the beauty of the lady's-slippers, marching in procession through the brown pine needles. A little footbridge has been built over the brook, to the bank where they flower thickest, and a wild clematis vine trails over it with an aptitude no deliberate planting could ever have achieved. Nor could any setting-out of bulbs have formed as graceful a

pattern as the lady's-slippers, with their orchid pouches, have created of their own accord. Restraint in picking them all these years is responsible for their affluent bloom. Not so their cultivated neighbors in the garden. So riddled with a variety of pests are they, I hate to look at them.

First, there is the columbine borer, whose identity I established with great difficulty. He is a thick-skinned worm, who, starting at the root, climbs up the stem, devouring as he goes and arriving at the flower just as the bud is about to break into bloom. I have not yet discovered his proper poison, and I have other equally weighty problems.

The poppies can't push out of their buds without assistance, and with the help of my fingers, untempered to the fragility of poppy petals, they emerge torn and shriveled, like premature babies delivered by an inept midwife. But worst of all is the Delphinium blight, which I have fought for three years with every known remedy. Last year I bought all new and healthy plants, and now they too have caught it. I am very much disheartened.

To the lay eye, of course, the garden looks really very charming. My visitors are enchanted by the thick blue forget-me-not border, the wealth of iris, the sweetness of the pinks and the sweet Williams; and they don't even seem to notice the curiously worn-out look their death pangs have given the columbines.

Then there is, of course, always and eternally the lousy little aphis. It is a relief, for once, to be both redundant and accurate. We have sprayed the rosebushes three times this week, and the sticky green creatures still cling to the buds. I never see them without thinking of an enchanting letter you once wrote me. Do you remember?

You sent me Adele's reply to your letter telling her that since you were going to marry me you thought it best to abandon your custom of going to the boat races together. She thought not, pointing out that her marriage had not interfered with the annual ritual. You wanted me to tell you what to say. For you wrote, 'She may not be an emotional pioneer, nor gifted with great intelligence, but she has a gentleness, a softness, a coziness, which have at certain very difficult times been to me a great boon.'

I, perhaps a little jealous and skeptical of my own gentleness, replied that I much preferred your continuing your boat race week-ends to your sitting at home of a June evening, looking wistful over the charms of a past love.

You wrote me: 'Remember this, Jinny, once and for all. There is no wistfulness over the past. For me, the present and the future are enough. And if, on a June evening, you see me sitting with a far-away look on my face, my thoughts will be, not of Adele and the boat races, but of the aphis attacking the tomato plants.'

If I were a poet, I should write a poem about our being joined in eternity by the aphis, as John Donne and his love were by the Flea. But poem or not, there was a humor you would have liked, when, the other night in the course of one of those little courting dinners so frequently tendered solitary ladies, the present aspirant said, 'My dear, you look so far away. What are you dreaming about?'

My words don't matter, for you would have known that my thoughts were on the aphis, the borer, and the blight.

June thirteenth

At last it is raining. Had the drought been prolonged, half the flowers would have died, and the vegetables would never have grown at all. Nellie came in with my tray this morning, wanting

to know whether she could have the afternoon to go somewhere with her husband, as he has only rainy days off. He is a gravedigger, for which he earns four dollars a day, and extra for graves dug on Sunday. I remember once, when I was driving Nellie down to the bus, she said: 'They have to measure them carefully, you know. They must all be just six feet long and three feet wide.'

Just the size of a bed, I thought — a single bed.

> The Grave's a fine and private place,
> But none, I think, do there embrace.

For the first few months after you were dead, I could n't bear rainy days (what days could I bear?), and there was almost no snow that winter. I used to think how cold and lonely you must be, there in the damp ground. Illogically enough, the very cliché, 'a blanket of snow,' would have been more comforting. A long time passed before I could persuade myself to go there. My whole association with graves was literary. My only gravedigger acquaintances were Hamlet's, his grief at Ophelia's grave my only measuring rod.

When the violets started blooming here that spring, I felt impelled to plant some on your grave. And that was a literary idea, too, partly, for the spring down there is much earlier than here. But I was walking in the woods that May, where I had last walked with you in December. And I had found violets in bloom there, do you remember? It frightened me terribly. Violets in December. I started to pick them and changed my mind. A catastrophic premonition overcame me. I cried as though my heart would break — and it did, such a short time later. 'Violets in December — violets in December,' I kept saying. 'They're so rare. They're like us.'

By then you had your arms around me, and when I said, 'It's too beautiful; it can't last,' you said I was a silly child, and I believed you, and we were both right.

June fifteenth

Is n't it odd? The last time I went away, although it was to my own house in New York, I could n't write you at all. It's because New York is so brittle; it has nothing at all of eternity about it. Buildings are torn down and replaced; streets change their character, and one's acquaintances vary according to where one lives and with whom one is flirting. Everything in a state of hurried motion, only the river with its recurrent, rhythmic flux — the tugs going up and down, the Boston boat leaving every night — to remind one of eternity and reality and timelessness.

I spent four days in New York, and, curiously enough, the most completely artificial experience I had was the only one that moved me — Greta Garbo in the poorest picture imaginable. Her gift for giving life glamour, for kindling the fire of excitement in one's breast, and satisfying it, too, is indescribable. It has nothing to do with characterization, for she is always the same; it bears no relation to the picture as a whole, for she never seems to participate in it. But I think I know what gives her that power.

Do you remember years ago, before I was willing to go to the movies, you went to see her in the picture version of *Anna Karenina*? When you came home you said she was marvelous and beautiful and moved just the way I did. A long time later we saw her together in Charlottesville in *The Green Hat*, — I can still hear the howls of the university students when the ring slipped off her finger, — and I was forced painfully to point out to you that I resembled her in no way.

'You may not think so,' you said, 'but when you're not there, watching her makes me feel just as I do when I'm watching you.'

To all men, she's the woman they love, or would if they could find her; and for women she embodies their most beautiful, their most loved and desired selves. That kind of immediate and personal appeal of the artist, over and above the story, cutting through the action, is really the highest expression of the art of acting, I think. It is the embodiment of high romance, projecting, both as one perceives it and as one recalls it, the universal and abstract pattern of romantic love.

But I did n't start out to write you about Greta Garbo, though I am convinced she too has her place in eternity. No, what I started to tell you was that although I am writing from a strange bed, before breakfast, there emanates from this sixty-year-old Vermont house a durability and peace entirely communicable; and in New York I could find nothing so, though the house I lodged in there was sixty years old too. But its security had been rendered only too vulnerable by the high apartment houses on either side, and in the heat of summer the public and private life of a whole community thrust itself in through the open window. Here it is quite different.

The house is large and square, with a cupola. It sits back from the road on a little hill, privacy ensured by a high hedge of late lilacs, still in full bloom. Many light, high-ceilinged rooms are furnished with the kind of things people had when we were children — wicker rocking-chairs and big mahogany sofas, bright-colored curtains in the windows, framed with Victorian cornices. In the drawing-room are six humorous and beautiful eighteenth and early nineteenth century portraits of the kind you love best, painted by itinerant painters.

June eighteenth

A long time it seems since I have written you. I came back from Vermont with an atrocious sore throat and cold in my head. No other physical immediacies are so efficacious an insulation from eternity as a red nose, a raucous voice, and a stuffy head.

This morning I feel better. The first wild strawberries of the year were on my breakfast tray, with cream as smooth and thick as velvet. The cold prevented my savoring their bouquet, for it is, of course, precious enough to be inhaled like Napoleon brandy. Each year I say I shall cultivate a bed of them in the garden, but it seems to be one of those ideas so easy to conceive, so difficult of execution. I did, however, put in a large and elegant cultivated strawberry bed last year, behind the farmer's house, and I must say the daily baskets brought for my inspection are of a beauty, but it is the beauty of still life rather than of temptation.

Is it just my perverseness that makes me value the *fraises des bois* a thousand times above their voluptuous cultivated brothers? Is it because, even with sun and rain just right, they last at most a week, and are infinitely laborious to cull, while the cultivated ones are brought down each morning in obedient plenty? Probably it's because the wild ones have a more delicate flavor, but I enjoy these elaborations. I suppose that's what people really mean by sophistication — elaborating the simple to such a degree that it is projected and heightened to a magnification of its own essence. Wild strawberries are in themselves no more delicious because I used to eat muscat grapes and hothouse peaches and nectarines in long-ago London Junes, but the simple sensation of taste is enlarged into a whole multiplication table of

emotion through consciousness of the contrast.

What sophistry to send into eternity! I shall arise at once, pick my onions, radishes, and lettuce, and then ride Sandy over the hills.

June twentieth

Have I told you about my visiting dog? He's really very charming — a large, black German shepherd with a beautiful head and an ungainly walk, his two hind legs having been broken by an automobile. His owners must stay in New York this summer, so I invited him to visit me. He is very much a city dog, unaccustomed to the society of his kind. In spite of the passionate infatuation for him developed immediately upon his arrival by Hedda's successor, he treats her with condescending politeness, and accompanies me, in the most approved one-man-dog manner, wherever I go. But never for a moment does he permit me the illusion that his devotion is personal. I'm always conscious of being a logical substitute for his mistress, since we are of the same genus and sex. His manners are perfect. He accords me the same courtesy which the down-at-the-heel Charleston gentility are always hoping to be shown by their paying guests.

He does n't really like the country at all, and would prefer remaining continually indoors, except for the horseback rides. Unlike my fantastic cavalcade of Sealyham, Scottie, dachshund, and shepherd, who rush ahead, following every scent, rolling each other over, perpetually risking Sandy's wrath in bites or kicks, he follows like the ideal groom, always to heel and never in the way. He has much the attitude of a kindly bachelor uncle visiting a large family of nieces and nephews.

He reminds me, in fact, of a friend I used to have whom I called '*mon oncle*' though he was little older than I am. I used it in the sense, I suppose, that the Russians use the phrase 'little uncle' or 'little father.' He was essentially a city person, too. But he loved to come up here, although he always sat indoors, avoided the sunshine, never swam in the pool, and thought all flowers were called flags. I first met him about six months after you were dead, when he offered me the hospitality of his mind, as generously and discerningly furnished as a luxurious and well-chosen library. His fine Gallic logic and sharpness in no way tapped the inherent warmth and sympathy of his nature.

For a long time he was the only man whose company I could bear, and we used to talk for hours on end of whatever came into our minds. Proust he was rereading, as I was finishing the last volumes, and he would read parts of it aloud to me in French in his so finely pitched and *sensible* voice. Sometimes, too, he would read me Racine, or sing me 'Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre.' He knew all the stanzas, and once when I was ill up here, alone, in late October, he came and kept me company for ten days until I was quite well again, as a kind uncle would.

Shortly after that, when I was in New York, I went to look at a collection of pictures, and found myself overwhelmed by the beauty of a tiny Vermeer. The picture was of a woman in blue against a yellow background. I wanted to weep for the clarity and perfection of it. Not since Swann's way had become mine had I looked at a Vermeer. You remember, I suppose, that he was the subject of Swann's unfinished book, but you never read the beautiful part about the Vermeer that Bergotte saw as he was dying. I'll copy it out for you: —

The circumstances of his death were as follows. An attack of uræmia, by no means serious, had led to his being ordered to rest. But one of the critics having written some-

where that in Vermeer's Street in Delft (lent by the Gallery at The Hague for an exhibition of Dutch painting), a picture which he adored and imagined that he knew by heart, a little patch of yellow wall (which he could not remember) was so well painted that it was, if one looked at it by itself, like some priceless specimen of Chinese art, of a beauty that was sufficient in itself, Bergotte ate a few potatoes, left the house, and went to the exhibition. At the first few steps that he had to climb he was overcome by giddiness. . . . At last he came to the Vermeer which he remembered as more striking, more different from anything else that he knew, but in which, thanks to the critic's article, he remarked for the first time some small figures in blue, that the ground was pink, and finally the precious substance of the tiny patch of yellow wall. His giddiness increased; he fixed his eyes, like a child upon a yellow butterfly which it is trying to catch, upon the precious little patch of wall. 'That is how I ought to have written,' he said. 'My last books are too dry, I ought to have gone over them with several coats of paint, made my language exquisite in itself, like this little patch of yellow wall.' Meanwhile he was not unconscious of the gravity of his condition. On a celestial balance there appeared to him, upon one of its scales, his own life, while the other contained the little patch of wall so beautifully painted in yellow. He felt that he had rashly surrendered the former for the latter. 'All the same,' he said to himself, 'I have no wish to provide the "feature" of this exhibition for the evening papers.'

He repeated to himself: 'Little patch of yellow wall, with a sloping roof, little patch of yellow wall.' While doing so he sank down upon a circular divan; and then at once he ceased to think his life was in jeopardy and, reverting to his natural optimism, told himself: 'It is just an ordinary indigestion from those potatoes; they were n't properly cooked; it is nothing.' A fresh attack beat him down; he rolled from the divan to the floor, as visitors and attendants came hurrying to his assistance. He was dead. Permanently dead? Who shall say? Certainly our experiments in spiritualism prove no more than the dogmas of religion that the soul survives death. All we can say is that everything is arranged as though we entered it carrying the burden of obligations contracted in a former life; there is no reason inherent in the conditions of life on this earth that can make us consider ourselves obliged to do good, to be fastidious, to be polite even, nor enable the talented artist to consider himself obliged to begin over again a score of times a piece of work the admiration aroused by which will matter little to his body devoured by worms, like the patch of yellow wall painted with so much knowledge and skill by an artist who must forever remain unknown and is barely identified under the name Vermeer. All these obligations which have not their sanction in our present life seem to belong to a different world, founded upon kindness, scrupulosity, self-sacrifice, a world entirely different from this, which we leave in order to be born into this world, before perhaps returning to the other to live once again beneath the sway of those unknown laws which we have obeyed because we bore their precepts in our hearts, knowing not whose hand had traced them there — those laws to which every profound work of the intellect brings us nearer and which are invisible only — and still! — to fools. So that the idea that Bergotte was not wholly and permanently dead is by no means improbable. They buried him, but all through the night of mourning, in the lighted windows, his books arranged three by three kept watch like angels with outspreading wings and seemed, for him who was no more, the symbols of his resurrection.

'Mon oncle' had just read me that portion the night before, and I no longer perceived Vermeer's yellow through my own eyes but through Bergotte's eyes, and Proust's as well. Such poignancy I could n't bear alone.

'Well, who'd you like to see it with?' I thought.

'Swann,' was the answer. 'Swann, of course.'

'But Swann is dead,' I thought.

'Yes, Swann is dead. Who else, though? Why, Jack, of course. If not Swann, Jack.'

And then suddenly it flashed over me — for in those days I had not become accustomed to the fact — that you, too, were dead. My distress was multiple and complex; for although by now the difference between your deadness and Swann's is no doubt quite clear to you, I have never formulated a satisfactory distinction between the state of death of Swann, whom I loved, but who never had physical existence, and of you, whom I love as much now that you have left your body as I did when you inhabited it. At the time, I felt as if a new and special death would take me, too, if some living eye did n't share with me, for at least a moment, that picture. So, although I had a train to catch in twenty minutes, I telephoned my 'uncle' to ask him to be sure to go, as soon as possible, to look at it — *faute de* Swann. Whether or not he did, I never knew.

Soon after, he fell in love — into a Proustian obsessive passion for as beautiful and bad a woman as I ever met. What one means by a 'bad woman' is difficult to explain, yet I knew intuitively, the moment I met her, the measure of her coldness, her greed, and her sensuality. It was her habit to attach to herself — although she was married and had a child — a series of talented men whose brains and spirits she picked of their choicest possessions, only to transfer them to the bordello of her mind, as bait for the next lover. In return, she propounded a series of secondhand tinsel *bons mots* which shone as gems of purest rays serene, lighted as they were by the feeling she gave every man that, if he were not her first lover, it was mere chance, for he had cast his predecessors into the limbo of oblivion.

My friend's entanglement in this glamorous cobweb persisted for over a year; and you know how sticky and treacherous cobwebs are, to cut through or push aside. His talk was all of her, quoting her counters; and his pain when he could no longer see her was unendurable. He emerged from the affair, not enriched as one is by a happy love, however brief, but embittered and cynical — the logic of his mind as useful as ever, but the clarity muddied. He became speciously frivolous in order to hide the emotional beggary in which she left him. His associates were people who understood him not at all, but, though we seldom met, we remained friends.

Late in the summer last year, he telephoned me from New York to propose himself for a brief holiday to begin the next day. The heat in town, he said, was sickening. A houseful of visitors, a sick cook, both cars out of commission, did not make an additional guest a pleasure, but I had n't the heart to say 'no.' A series of minor accidents to the car I'd rented caused me to be an hour late in meeting him. When I reached the station he was nowhere to be found. On telephoning home, a telegram was read me that might well have sprung from the brains of Saki's Clovis and the mad Duchess in *Alice in Wonderland*. Ennui, impatience, annoyance, irritability — who knows what — had sent him back to New York on the next train. I reached home after my useless sixty-mile drive to find the other guests in a state of elaborate vindictiveness. But my interest had gone. I remembered the day when his being alive had sustained me through the pain of Swann's and your deadness, different though they were. Now he, too, was dead; and in a third way. A sort of suicide, I suppose.

It's a curious story, is n't it? Why I should be reminded of it by a visiting dog I can't tell. Oh, yes. I remember! It was because the dog has beautiful manners as well as a kind heart.

June twenty-first

Nellie, when I was driving her back from the bus to-day, told me about her three-year-old daughter, Lorna, who was taken to Sunday School yesterday for the first time. When the other children sang hymns, she joined in loud and strong with 'It's Springtime in the Rockies,' to the consternation of her ten-year-old Scotch Calvinist cousin.

'But she loves to sing,' said Nellie, 'and those are the only words she knows.' I suppose in the old country they would have been 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus' — or is n't that a Calvinist hymn?

I wonder if you remember Nellie. She's pretty and trim, with bright red hair, and she worked for you long before we knew each other. Then she married, but after a year or two her husband could find no work, so she came to me when her baby was a year old. It was autumn, and I discovered only too quickly how little she knew about laying wood fires. I led her carefully from one fireplace to another, remembering how painstakingly you had taught me their various idiosyncrasies.

'Is n't it funny?' she said. 'It's just a few years ago Mr. Sherburn took me all around the house just the same way and showed me the same thing. But I did n't remember how to do it.'

Nellie's whole approach to life is based on memory. I've no idea what happens in her mind at the occurrence of a new or unique experience. I do remember, though, one morning very early in the days when sleep was as precious to me as the black pearl I have always coveted and shall never own, the telephone next my bed rang and a voice asked for Nellie's husband, who, unknown to me, had been spending the night there. Almost immediately Nellie appeared, terror-stricken.

'Oh, Mrs. Sherburn,' she said. 'I can't tell you how disappointed I am. I don't see how anybody knew Ed was here. I'm so disappointed.'

I'm sure it was a clue to the memory school of thought, but I have never been quite able to analyze it.

Later

My ride to-day was n't the best possible, but that was my own fault. I'm almost ashamed to tell you about it. You see, for two years after you died I could n't bear to ride at all. I don't know whether it was just fear, or because you had given me Sandy and to ride him alone would have made me miss you too much. At any rate, various friends rode him, and one or another of them strained his shoulder badly. Not even six months at pasture did any good. As a desperate remedy, I had him blistered last year, and he seemed to recover. But now I allow no one else to ride him, and even I am very careful. Fortunately, my fear has left me, and his high spirits no longer bother me. Five days ago, when I last rode, he was full of little bucks and tricks, and I probably let him run more than he should have. But to-day he was stiff in his shoulder, and I had to walk him the whole time. I did n't mind, though, for it was hot, and I took the chance to notice all the circular maidenhair ferns and each wild iris, fugitive and sweet. I fancy he will be better to-morrow.

To-night is Midsummer Night's Eve, the shortest night in the year. I envy you your timelessness. But even in this minor world you were no slave to time, and I become daily less so.

(*To be continued in the next issue*)

THE CONTRIBUTORS' CLUB

Sound and Life

As I was once walking along a country road I heard to one side, across a field and through a screen of birches, the pleasant clang of hammer and anvil from a farmer's smithy, and pausing awhile in the rural quiet, listening to so humanly ancient a sound, I began to meditate on the history of sounds in human life, of how certain characteristic sounds had accompanied certain ages of history, and of how such sounds had vanished out of life, some, perhaps, to reappear, and others to be heard no more. Quickened by the neighboring clang, my mind imagined in its own ear a sound familiar to many centuries, the tapping of the armorer's hammer, and I wondered in what walled and old-fashioned city it had last been obscurely heard; and I thought, too, of the sound of arrows loosed by a great company of bowmen, and wondered in what heraldic battle the air had last filled with that arched and formidable humming.

In the beginning the world must have been very pleasantly still. The ancient quiet of earth, which is but a vulnerable fragment of the pure silence of space, had not yet gone to hide, like a spirit, in lonely places. Those vast, fantastic fragments that are the continents we know, each ringed with the timeless cadences and confusions of the sea, were full of that inland peace which begins where the ocean murmur dies away. The first sounds to visit human ears were those which are perhaps destined to be the last; that to which we listen Adam heard. Spacing the quiet, men heard the lovely sounds of earth — rain in the deep woods on drying, late-summer leaves, the stir of trees at sunrise that have been still all night, the fiery snap of lightning, the song of a bird by a lake. A small and local sound of stone struck upon stone, that sharp, complete, integral click without vibration, must have been the first true 'made' sound to part the ancient leaves, to be, for ages too vast for centuries to count, the tokening sound of man. Metal with its lengthening vibration then confused the stone, more voices jargoned (for this early world, it would seem, was filling up) the crowd din, and cries of archaic war arose, and presently beginning sounds of the arts and trades intruded with the numbered years.

So began the pageant, with silences and sounds that have not died. For all our noises, the first quiet is nearer than we know. The inland stillness is a sea: if our sounds trouble it like fountains, like fountains they fall back and are no more; if it be gone to hide like a spirit, it can return like an armed man, and there were cities on the war front thus retaken. The voices of earth are likewise ours, harassed and lessened only in so far as they rise from the kingdom of creatures, but still chiefest oracles and gods. Secluded tribes still practise the arts of stone, and I have myself heard the attendant sound; there are yet people who make and use the most primitive of metal implements. For beginnings are often like the roots of trees, remaining below and unchanged in their nature, while there are change and development from them overhead.

What vanished sounds, what fine ghosts of the ear, rise from the known years! Screaming upon their axles, in a storm of dust and hoofs, the war chariots charge the Biblical plain; the measured plash of oars in banks rises from some galley bound for Ostia, the heavy wooden pound of the quartermaster's timing mace heard muffled from below decks; behind Pentelic colonnades, the stringed music of lost instruments mingles with a vast chanting before the gods. One hears the hiss of the snakes of Greek fire from Byzantine citadels, bells ringing against thunderstorms in Gothic cities; the popgun sound of Renaissance artillery, the rumble of the first coaches on

the first good roads, and the howl of wind in the rigging of an eighteenth-century man-of-war in foul weather at anchor in the downs.

They are all gone; men will hear them no more; and in our own day the last sounds of the handicrafts descend, fighting gallantly, toward the same oblivion. It may be that they will hold their ultimate own, and presently mount, passing on their upward way the whole huge childishness of modern noise down-tumbling. What contemporary sound, one pauses to ask, will summon up our own strange years? The universal grind of gears when traffic starts again at a light, the demoniac tattoo of a riveter? In my own mind, it is something more subtle, more like the dry, merciless, electrical tick one hears in the pressured silence of a power room, a small sound, obedient, without life, and astronomically alien to the bones of man.

There is one sound which catches the exact note of the nineteenth century — that era of rather simple machinery, growing populations, optimism, and more facts which has now so largely collapsed, hammered by the war and disintegrated by the motor. It is the whistle of a locomotive at nightfall in the country. The sound is still the same piercing larum it has always been; it has authority, its own self-confidence, and it is to-day almost elegiac and old-fashioned.

Perhaps there are far more old sounds alive than we know. All kinds of antique noises are still vigorous in that most conservative of all kingdoms, the sea, and in the country are a world of sounds so honorably old and so closely interwoven with the pattern of life that they are no more on the defensive than the wind in the trees. A few weeks ago, during haying time, I listened to the sounds rising from the fields, and marked them the same I had heard in boyhood. From a wide swale under bordering trees rose the old, pleasant rattle of the mowing machine; I heard the clicking song of whetstone and scythe, the swish of some blade on the grindstone and the grindstone's treadle squeak; and late in the hot afternoon the gray, weathered rack passed us, fragrant and full-laden, creaking the same remembered creak, the same remembered groan.

Sound is more of life than we know. It is an inheritance and a thought, a mood and a power. Now inherent and determined, now create and mutable, it accompanies each life and age, resolved into one unperceived and enormous music. It is very much the earth's, being as much a part of landscape as the sky, even as the changing pitch of a brook along its course is part of the integrity of the moment in time and the water. A whole way of life which has not given us one sweet and memorable sound may be justly suspect. Such a culture is only a kind of island in history, a weedy acre or two removed from the wide stream of the rhythm and tradition of man, doubtful soil in which the wise will note a proprietary print of cloven hoofs. The running stream will pass it, behind a bend and trees it will disappear, and Time will gather it into his illusion, and presently there will be ancient quiet again, and sounds born living of the spirit of man.

HENRY BESTON

THE BEDSIDE MANNER

IT was one of those gray days — gray outside the sanitarium and gray inside. In addition to tuberculosis, I had pleurisy, and my skin looked like a blend of Paris green and putty. Charcoal-like smudges were under my eyes. And then I had a visitor.

After a first unguarded gasp of astonishment, she smiled from her face out, and said cheerily, 'Oh, how well you look!'

Each breath I took was a scythe-sweep of pain. 'Thank you,' I answered brightly. 'I feel well enough.'

Of course I did not want her to say, 'You look like a can of worms, my dear,' nor did I want to tell her that I felt as desolate and cheerless as a northeast room on a winter afternoon. But somewhere between what we did say and what we did not say there must lie a working sick-room formula.

I like to have callers. I appreciate it when they find time to come off their beaten, busy way to pause with me. It is a real effort for many, because they feel constrained. They are afraid to talk about their activities, or to act too radiantly healthy, for fear that the contrast will make me

unhappy. Some, too, are deathly afraid of tuberculosis; these make a sacrifice to come. That I am not now a menace makes no difference. The fear is there.

This constraint is unnecessary. Long ago I came to an understanding with myself about my restricted universe. This has become my normal life, and I have filled it with interests. I am as busy in my way as many of my visitors are in theirs. If they could quite believe that, they could be natural with me.

Most of my visitors must, I know, take a deep breath outside my door, and plunge as if into cold water. They are animated in a breathless way. They tell me how well I look, or how much better I look than they expected. They tell me that probably I shall be cured in a month or two. They say that they envy me my comfortable bed and sunny room. They playfully remark that they do not believe I am ill at all — just lazy.

Of course I do not always look well. I know when I do not. Also, I am aware that I shall be cured, if a pneumococcus can be kept from getting me, not in two months, but in twelve. Nor can any of them mislead me into believing that they would like to be confined to bed for months and months. While they are telling me all these things I want to cry out, 'Oh, please don't feel so uncomfortable! Don't make me strain every nerve to maintain this artificial gladness. Relax that comedy mask. Treat me as you used to treat me.'

Those who are afraid plunge straight from the door to the corner farthest from the bed. Every minute they spend with me is agony for them. Even though I know that people do well to be afraid of tuberculosis, I am hurt a little to have them afraid of me. I want to say, 'Please don't be afraid. But if you can't help it, don't go through with this. Write me a note instead.'

There is one visitor I never have, but I hear the other patients talk about her. This visitor starts by weeping over the supine figure on the bed. After the patient has been quieted with codeine, the consoling friend sits quietly by, holding a clammy hand and telling about Uncle Harry's first wife who died of tuberculosis. 'She looked something like you, and I remember that she broke down just about like this. She dragged along, though; it took her about two years to die.'

Once, to be sure, a lugubrious head appeared at my door. It belonged to a great, bloodhound-looking man. He said, 'Pardon me; I always come into this sad room when I am near here. My daughter died right in this bed just a year ago. Let me leave these lilies in memory of her.'

Lilies have a funereal association for me, and, besides, they give me hay fever. But they stayed on my bureau until they fell apart — in memory of the girl who died in my bed.

They come to see us, the too-cheerful, the frightened, and the morbid. There is an ideal visitor, too, of course. I have in mind several sprightly ones of my own who have been faithful these many months. They do not come unless they are in holiday mood. They have a talent for getting involved in minor catastrophes, and the gift of laughing at themselves. They see nothing abnormal in my existence, so we are very comfortable and quietly gay. They laugh at my jokes, and there is really nothing like a little well-placed appreciation to cheer one. They have the bedside manner.

Sometimes in my fancy I see the little rod-like tubercle bacilli playing on my electric light cord, sliding up and down; they chin themselves on the edge of my bed light. Quite often they peer over my shoulder. The one that frisks on top of my locker is grinning down at me now. He knows that no one will pay any attention to what I think about the bedside manner.

RUTH REED

PLATITUDES

I HAVE just reached the age of forty, which is neither young nor old. A man of forty is too old not to have made up his mind about many things and too young not to be willing to change it. He has reached a stage in which the pupa of an insect must be just before emerging from the cocoon; he is about to assume that definite shape which will be his last upon this earth and which gives a name to his species.

After forty years of living one must have

learned something, even if that something be very small. And it is good at appropriately solemn dates to stop and make an inventory of what one has learned. This is a sort of examination of consciousness, if not of conscience. There is no need of doing this at forty rather than at thirty-nine or twenty-five, but the long and rather dull chrysalid stage inclines one to revery, and, if one must dream, it is more interesting to dream about reality than about illusion.

I have learned many things, I think, which would — and, if the present financial stringency endures, will — make a book, 'Essays of a Man of Forty.' No publisher would print it, but I am used to that. Among the more exciting things that I have learned are that people never will admit that they are acting upon moral principles, that questions are asked, not to be answered, but to furnish grounds for rebuttal, that the main value of the study of ethics is to justify one's instinctive conduct, that people would rather seem stupid than deaf. I don't think I have learned anything much outside of the field of human relations.

When I sit down to make an inventory of the things I have learned, I find that the first in importance and the hardest to confess is the Truth of Platitudes. Platitudes are dull, boring, and ugly, but they are true. When I was fifteen, I thought that beauty was truth, truth beauty, and unpleasant adjectives were sufficient evidence of falsity. For years I have resisted the suspicion that Keats might be wrong, as one resists the suspicion that an ugly woman might make a good mother, though a bad wife. But now, while at tea parties I shall continue to avoid the usual verbal formulas for platitudes, — as I avoid discussing mathematics with mathematicians, — I shall initially grant their rightness.

I have always been impressed with the brilliance of primitive man's discovery that the sun which rises in the morning is the same sun that set the night before. That was a hard discovery to make, for after all the sun sets at a point opposite to the point at which it rises, and one had to face the problem of how in the world it got back there without sneaking across the sky in the dark. To discover at that time what is now obvious required a stretch of the imagination which few of us are capable of making, like the discovery — speaking of platitudes — of the wheel.

We have all of us been brought up on platitudes, and for that very reason we have never believed in them. To believe in them requires as great an effort from a man of my generation as to believe in miracles or alchemy or the generation of eels from marinated horsehairs. When the light breaks upon you that after all a rolling stone does not gather any moss, in spite of the fact that you've heard it all your life, you may still sneer at it as a proverb, but when it comes to paying for your wife's appendectomy you won't sneer at its meaning.

One of the platitudes which have always annoyed me is that people talk best about what interests them — namely, shop. I was brought up never to talk shop and to look upon shop talk as somewhat ill-bred. As a consequence — though I did n't see it was a consequence — I found a surprising number of dull talkers. I remember one such case — a professor, needless to say — who seemed not merely dull but idiotic. He held an excellent position, had undoubtedly written more footnotes than any other man of his age, and had simply a staggering knowledge about — well, never mind about what, for he reads the *Atlantic*. Other people found him stimulating; I found him depressing. Others found him judicious; I found him credulous and superstitious. Others praised his taste; I could only deprecate his vulgarity and boorishness. During an unavoidable conversation with him I suddenly and desperately mentioned his specialty. Like an opal in the sunlight this gray mind began to scintillate. His eyes gleamed; his voice (which had always seemed to percolate through a mouthful of cream soup) became crystalline; his sentences (which like wounded snakes had always dragged their slow lengths along) became crisp and vivacious; his ideas made sense; and he at once became capable of using a word in two successive contexts in the same meaning. Surely if this rapid shift from imbecility to rationality was the effect of talking shop, nothing but praise could be given to shop-talking. It became not merely a social amenity but a social necessity. It changed worms into humming

birds, weeds into flowers, dullards into wits.

It was a blow to find so much wisdom in what everybody already knew, like finding the United States Senate right about some matter of foreign policy. But there was wisdom in the platitude. Why not admit it? Admitting it led to further admissions. I soon discovered that there is no place like home, that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, and that old friends are the best. To be sure, these fundamental truths were not phrased precisely like that. But whether one says that there's no place like home or that man is not necessarily gregarious makes very little difference. The proverb simply gives one the approval of tradition for what one has discovered to be a truth. But what a relief to wake up to the fact that one can admit without shame that he prefers his own piano to his neighbor's radio.

It is our curious love of novelty which makes us think that something which is old is therefore bad. But even in science one can only discover what has always been true. There is novelty only in the realm of knowledge, not in the realm of existence. That kind of novelty has, of course, a certain value. In the smaller realm of practical knowledge, to discover old truths for one's self is of the greatest importance. One cannot live by clichés. Hence, when one has learned that the old friends are the best, one has simply given what Newman called real assent to it. But that is tremendous. Platitude though it be, it takes on a new significance. Hence I am not proposing that one simply accept the old platitudes without criticism at the age of twenty. That would be stultifying. Just as throwing off traditional morality without ever having taken it on is stultifying. I am merely saying that to have discovered them for one's self at the age of forty is like a sudden conversion.

One must, of course, admit that platitudes do not form a self-consistent system. It has already been pointed out by others that each has its contradictory as neatly expressed as itself. That is undeniable. But is n't that further proof of their truth? Has not the racial conscience seen that generalizations in the field of human affairs are impossible and that 'there are two sides to every question'? I have not spent forty years of my life to learn that a collection of proverbs can take the place of reason. The delimitations of their validity must be left to the individual. They are like Delphic oracles which need an interpreter. Their interpretation is the work of a lifetime. But when their validation is complete, one has the comfortable feeling of agreeing with the race as a whole. One has seen a truth, not merely accepted it.

GEORGE BOAS

ARTS AND CRAFTS

WHEN I hear lofty brows denote
Art as an astral glow remote,
And Artists as a Sacred Clan
Who should n't share the woes of man
Or need to think of bread and meat
Or jobs to hold or homes to heat,
I find my mind begins to dwell
On Hals, Da Vinci, Raphael,
And wonder if *they* would n't toss
Such talk aside as applesauce.
I doubt if Rubens would declaim
'Painting to order' was a shame,
Or Rembrandt view his robust art
As something High, Aloof, Apart;
Nor does it somehow seem to me
Van Dyck would talk of being 'free,'
Nor Michelangelo nor Titian
See 'art for art's sake' as their mission.
No, to my crass, commercial view
The Masters had their jobs to do
And their mundane ambitions were
To Satisfy the customer.
And thus, as decent workmen would,
They did their work the best they could,
And, with no lofty bunk, loved, laughed,
And toiled at their commercial craft,
And did n't hold themselves too proud
To please 'the herd' or reach 'the crowd.'
I think that's how the Masters worked,
Professionals, who never shirked
Or sulked because the Artist's Soul
Was Balked of Its Supernal Goal,
But took commissions as they came,
Glad of the chance to get the same.
Art was their Business and their trade.
— Pretty good pictures those boys made!

BERTON BRALEY